Wii

# HARE-RAISING!!!

BEHIND THE SCENES WITH RAYMAN RAVING RABBIDS 2

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Wii TALK SMACK
**WWE SMACKDOWN VS. RAW 2008**

DS LINKS TO THE FUTURE
**THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: PHANTOM HOURGLASS**

SMASH UPDATE
**THE SCOOP ON SUPER SMASH BROS. BRAWL**

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MINUS
3 THREE
EQUAL
5 FIVE

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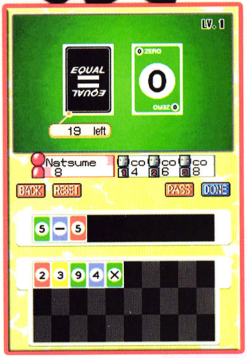
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EQUAL
0 ZERO
19 left
Natsume 8
co 4
co 6
co 8
BACK
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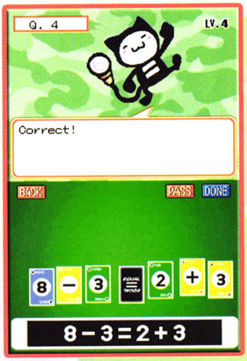
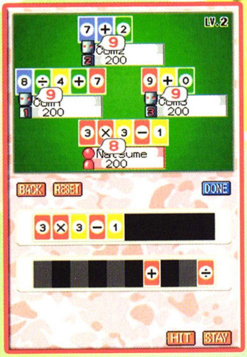
PASS
DONE
5 − 5
2 3 9 4 ×


Q. 4
LV. 4
BACK
PASS
DONE

Correct!

8−3=2+3


LV. 2
7 + 2
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Com1 200
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Com3 200
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RESET
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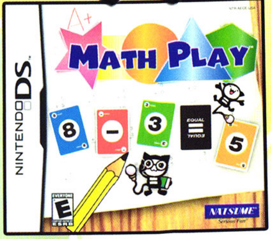
+ ÷
HIT
STAY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# Rune Factory

## A Fantasy Harvest Moon

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Till the land, grow crops, catch fish, make friends and *battle monsters!* Battling against fierce beasts is very important for your survival, but making friends with them is essential for your farm life.

*...Coming August 2007*

Tori

I'm so happy… you made it back… I was so very worried...

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# NINTENDO POWER

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**74 Into the Light**
Learn about Luminous Arc, a new strategy-RPG for DS, directly from the creators in our behind the scene interview.

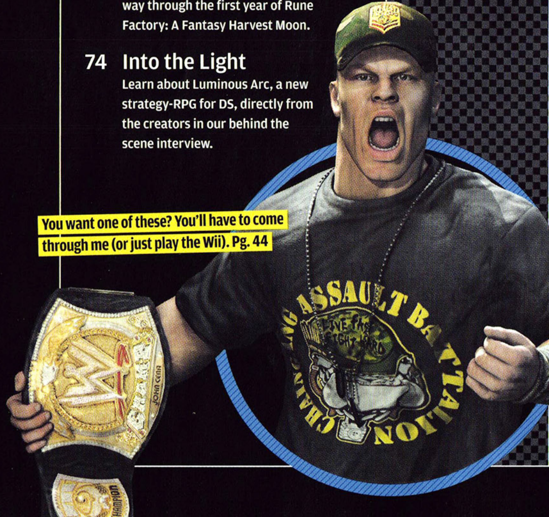
Arm-cannon license required.

38
Samus redefines *gorgeous* on the Wii.

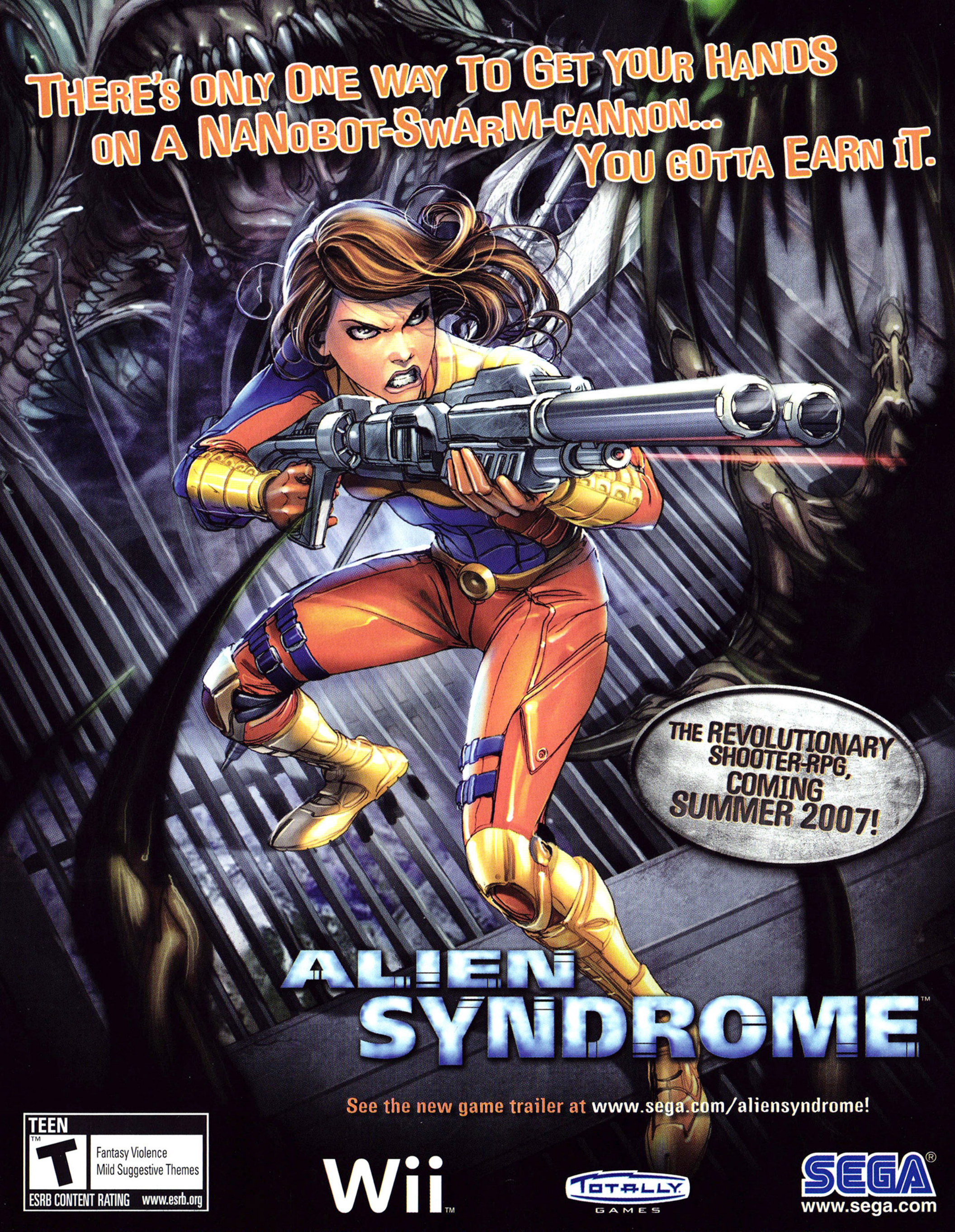
52
That oughta take the wind out of your sails.

Go
Stop
Menu
Route

Gotta keep the collar popped.


You want one of these? You'll have to come through me (or just play the Wii). Pg. 44

We're pretty sure this is the first time the Wii remote has represented a sausage.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# NINTENDO POWER

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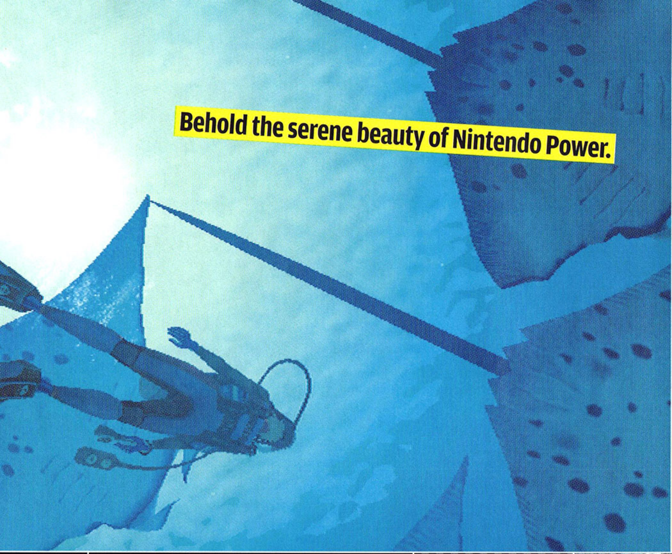

Behold the serene beauty of Nintendo Power.

**28**

MARIO GOES INTO ORBIT; DK BLASTS OFF; BRAIN AGE IS BACK IN SESSION; NIGHTS BEGINS ITS JOURNEY; VISION TRAINING COMES INTO FOCUS; TURN IT AROUND TURNS IT AROUND; DRAWN TO LIFE COLORS US EXCITED; DDR SHAKES ITS Wii THANG; AND MORE

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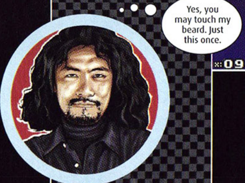
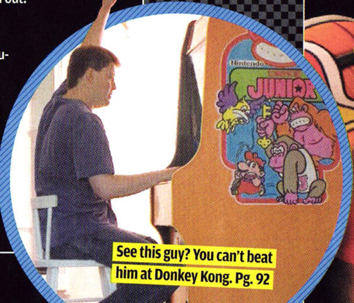


Yes, you may touch my beard. Just this once.

**29**
Goodness gracious, great barrels of fire.

The only danger is the occasional singed monkey butt.



See this guy? You can't beat him at Donkey Kong. Pg. 92

# Brunswick® PRO BOWLING

"The game's physics are incredibly realistic . . . ." *Sports Illustrated for Kids*

PlayStation 2
Wii
Brunswick Pro Bowling
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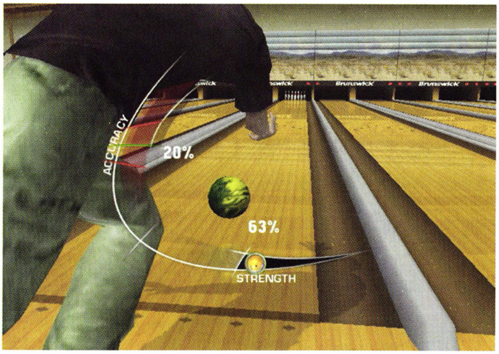
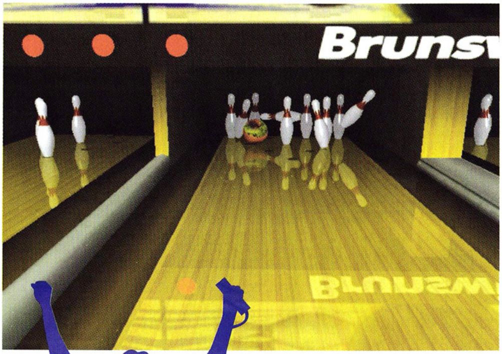
REAL TIME LANE CHANGING CONDITIONS

IMPROVE FROM AMATEUR TO BRUNSWICK PRO CHAMPION

AUTHENTIC BRUNSWICK BOWLING PRODUCTS





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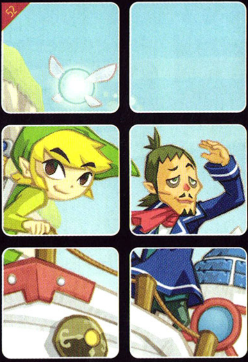
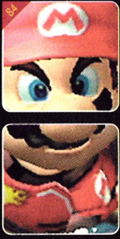
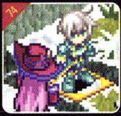
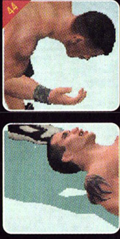
DS = Nintendo DS
NES = Nintendo Entertainment System
Wii = Wii





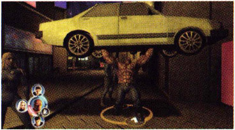




# FANTASTIC FOUR
# RISE OF THE SILVER SURFER
THE VIDEOGAME

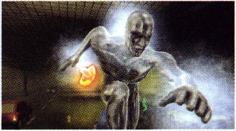
SEE THE MOVIE
PLAY THE GAME
JUNE 15TH

*Combine super powers with all-new Fusion Attack System!*



*Truly destructible environments*

*Unite and fight with 4 Player Co-Op*



*Loads of unlockables including alternate costumes*

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TEEN T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Fantasy Violence

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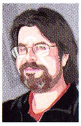
# Pulse

## Wii THREAT DOWN



Just as bears aren't really the number-one threat to America as asserted by Stephen Colbert on The *Colbert Report*, Wii isn't the number-one threat to gamers as many industry pundits have recently griped. Their argument goes something like this: if Wii is a huge success, then game publishers will put all their development dollars, yen, pounds and euros into making Wii Sports knockoffs and sushi-rolling sims while more-complex titles for core gamers will become as rare as grizzly bears in Manhattan. The argument ignores publishers' primary motivation, which is money. Money, to the tune of more than 10 billion dollars annually, has flowed from gamers to game publishers over recent years, and most of the spending was on shooters, adventures, RPGs, and other core-friendly titles. The thought that game companies would turn their backs on that market is as silly as ignoring the real number-one threat: naked mole rats! At least that's what NP's naked-mole-rat expert, Chris Hoffman, has to say on the matter.

Further evidence that traditional game genres are as healthy as ever can be seen in this month's Metroid Prime 3: Corruption cover story. According to senior writer Steve Thomason, Retro Studios' long-anticipated title is worth the wait. I boldly predict that with one flick of the Wii remote Metroid Prime 3 will make believers out of critics everywhere. And the story on DS is just as positive. The Legend of Zelda: Phantom Hourglass is quite possibly the best DS game ever. So the next time you hear some bearish boor proclaim gaming doom at the hands of Wii, ignore the growling. It's just noise. And remember that naked mole rats attack silently!

**Scott Pelland**
**Managing Editor**

LETTERS

### DON'T WRITE ANGRY

Why did you guys seem so mad in the July issue [Volume 217]? In the Pulse column in particular, your comments were different and maybe more tense than in the previous Pulse comments. Or is it just me?

JSA
via the Internet

*It's pretty easy to catch us on a bad day, especially against deadlines when we're working on Pulse. We'll try to be nicer this time, but no guarantees.*

### THAT DIDN'T LAST LONG

When you NP writers were kids, did you hope to be magazine writers? Or did you have bigger and better plans that obviously failed?

JNMaster
via the Internet

*Why you little . . . wait; we just said we'd be nicer to the kind folks writing in. Everyone measures success in different ways, and most of us believe that working for Nintendo Power is an upstanding profession. Thanks for sending us your letter! Jerk. Oops.*

### AND THE BAND PLAYS ON

In Volume 217 you made an announcement about Capital Steps' new album *I'm Not Listening*. Well, the band recently changed their name to Square Wail. I'm guessing that they changed their name right after you went to press. I looked for the Capital Steps MySpace profile and couldn't find it due to the mix-up over the name change!

Donovan E.
via the Internet

*You hit it right on the head. Just after we sent the magazine to the printer, we got word that the group changed their name.*

### HE'S PROBABLY ALSO A GOOD COOK

As I was reveling in my glorious completion of the Mario Kart DS Mission mode, I glanced through the names that scrolled by during the credits, and I spotted one that intrigued me: Ichiro Suzuki. Is this the same Gold Glove Ichiro that fields flyballs for the Mariners, or is it a mere coincidence?

Yeehawintexas15
via the Internet

*We're pretty sure it's a mere coincidence. But after watching his amazing work regimen over the past couple of years, we wouldn't be surprised if it's the same guy.*

### BABY GAME FOR BABIES

I was babysitting this kid the other day, and he had a Wii at his house. I asked him if he wanted to play me in bowling on Wii Sports. I thought to myself, "I'm going to go a little easy on him and let him win to make him feel good." The game started and he got a strike. I thought it was luck until he got another, and another, and another . . . you get the point. In the end this 4-year-old kid got 225. I'm a 15-year old and I got 136. How does he do it?

Stunned Bowling Champ
via the Internet

*You got beat by a 4-year old? Hah! We're running this letter just so your friends can see how badly you got schooled.*

### PLAYING THE ORGAN

I am very displeased at the Everybody Votes channel. I recently noticed a question about donating a kidney, and my problem with it is that it is only yes or no and there was no way for me to answer that I did it already. I donated my kidney to a family friend that I've known my entire life who had been on dialysis for the past 9 years. I am fully recovered and my family friend, who is more like another mother to me, is doing very well too. In ending I encourage everyone to think how much you can change a friend's life if they needed a kidney or any other body organ that you have to spare.

Daniel W.
via the Internet

*Nothing like heroic unselfishness to make us feel worthless. Maybe JNMaster was right. In defense of the Everybody Votes channel, we expect that the question was meant to poll intent to donate, so obviously a "yes" vote would have been appropriate in your extraordinary case.*

### YOU GOTTA TURN IT UP

When the Wii remote is turned upside down (battery cover facing up), it seems like the remote is unable to sense which direction it is tilting, causing some odd on-screen behavior in at least two games that I own. In Excite Truck (while rotating trophies), and Kororinpa: Marble Mania, if you happen to roll the marble on the bottom of a stage, the stage will spin around kinda unpredictably. Why is it that the Wii remote has this strange behavior, and can anything be done to remedy it?

Clayton W.
via the Internet

*Here's an idea: play it like it was designed to be played. Problem solved. (Man, we're trying, JSA, but it's so hard.)*

## END OF THE LINE?

I've been noticing recently that the Game Boy's run is coming to an end. The first sign is the fact that the list for upcoming games for it is getting smaller and smaller. The second sign was that you guys took it off the Most Wanted list. Is the Game Boy's 18-year run coming to an end?

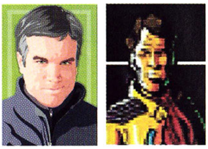
Matthew S.
via the Internet

*It's starting to look like it, Matthew. There's a little life left in the most popular video game system ever, but the success of the DS has taken its toll on the legendary handheld.*

## TWIN SPEED

I've noticed that Drew Williams bears an uncanny resemblance to F-Zero's own Dr. Stewart . . . any chance they're related?

Pete M.
via the Internet

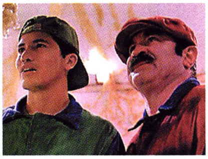


*Separated at birth?*

## JUSTICE FOR ALL

I just saw the old Super Mario Bros. movie, and I have to say that it really doesn't do Mario and the Mushroom Kingdom justice. I think Nintendo should get the game's voice actors and an animation team to create a new CG Mario film! There are so many interesting enemies like Petey Piranha and Bowser, as well as many new characters. It could even be a trilogy of films!

Jackson
via the Internet



*How is this not a cinematic masterpiece? Anyway, you might be onto something. Considering the popularity of animated films, this seems the perfect time, too.*

## MOM-PROOFING

I love my Nintendo consoles, and I love my mom, but I was wondering if there was any way to keep my consoles safe from the latter. A little while ago, my mom tripped over my GameCube's video cable, yanking it out of the TV and destroying the cable. Recently, I got a Wii (finally) and my mom and I started to have Wii Sports Tennis matches. She can get a bit excited with the motion of swinging, though, and ended up smashing her Wii remote into the coffee table on an over-enthusiastic forehand. As a result of the brutal beating, the Wii remote no longer works. (I know the Wii remote is a quality piece of hardware, but there are accidents . . . and then there's my mom.) Now I'm starting to wonder if my DS is next on the chopping block. Is there any parent-proofing kit for Nintendo products? What would you guys do?

Pat E.
via the Internet

*Maybe you could get your old playpen out of the attic and make her stand in it when she plays. Either that, or threaten to ground her. That always worked for us.*

## FAIR TRADE OR GLOBAL CONSPIRACY?

I got a huge laugh out of your advice in the August issue [Volume 218] that event Legendaries aren't meant to be hoarded, and that we Trainers should try to find the rarest Legendary we can and train it well to trade for one of those event Legendaries. In your world are there unicorns and fairies, and do wishes come true? Out here in the real world, event Pokémon trade only for other event Pokémon.

PokéMom Nikki B.
via the Internet

In response to Lynette H. in Volume 218 regarding the GTS trade requests, I think most of the trades that occur on the GTS are fair. I check it regularly, and I always find that a requested Pokémon is the same level, and usually the same generation, as what is being offered. People request Magmortars for Electivires, both of which need specific items to evolve and need a specific GBA cartridge to obtain. I'll admit that some are a bit unequal, but that is not always a bad thing. There will be the Trainers who ask for Palkia or Dialga for whatever they put up for offer, but there are also those who offer big and ask little. For instance, while I was checking the Kyogre offers, a Trainer had put a Kyogre up for offer and all they were asking for in return was a Misdreavus of any level or gender. Needless to say, I got myself a Kyogre. There are really good deals to include yourself in; you've just got to keep an eye out for them.

Dillon W.
via the Internet

## VIDEO GAMES LOVE

My name is Jeremy and I proposed marriage to Elizabeth, my girlfriend of four years, at the Video Games Live event in Dallas in June. [Show director] Tommy Tallarico allowed me to do this on stage after the music from Civilization was performed, right before the intermission. I am so thankful to him for letting me propose marriage in a fun and unique way. Attached are pictures of us at the event with Tommy Tallarico.

Jeremy
via the Internet

*That's awesome, Jeremy. Congrats from all of us at NP! But man, are your children gonna be hopelessly geeky. We kid!*

## YOU'RE BOTH RIGHT

As longtime readers of Nintendo Power, my brother and I seem to have picked up on your habit of talking long and hard about virtually nothing. For instance, not long ago he and I held a conversation on what we thought would be the Nintendo franchise most likely to receive an M-rated facelift. He immediately offered up Star Fox, and I told him outright that he was a fool. The answer is obviously Fire Emblem. The series doesn't have nearly the level of following as, say, Metroid or Zelda, and young kids aren't very keen on strategic warfare in the first place. Reworking the template for an older demographic wouldn't exclude as much as interest a potentially larger audience. Then imagine the art direction following suit, complete with a riveting, epic, war-torn atmosphere on par with that of Lord of the Rings. Of course, my brother chose to disagree, but as one of your faithful readers, how could his opinion be valued?

J. R. C.
via the Internet

*Holy cow, J. R. C.; have you been bugging our offices? That's exactly the kind of inane arguments that we have. Seriously, with that kind of nitpicking, you have a bright future in video game journalism.*

## AND NOW FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT

Ever since the release of Pokémon FireRed and LeafGreen, one question has been on my mind. Since FireRed and LeafGreen were remakes of older Pokémon games will there be other remakes? I know that many other Trainers besides me hopefully await a return visit to the lands of Johto, and being that Nintendo Power is the most reliable source of gaming information, I ask for both your knowledge on this and your opinions.

CD Gamer
via the Internet

*We actually hear this from a lot of people, but we disagree respectfully. There's still a lot of room for innovation in this industry, and retreads of older games isn't the way to show it.*

## INVITATION ONLY

Thank you for doing a Playback article on the game Uninvited in Volume 217. When I played the game back then I thought it was cool. Since then, nobody I've talked to has ever heard of it. After about 10 years of almost going crazy looking for it and not knowing if I just dreamed it up, you proved to me it's real! I thought I was losing it, but when I read your magazine I was so relived to see it. Now my search continues. And it's all thanks to you!!

Gamer D.
via the Internet

Hey NP, great job with the Playback article on Uninvited! I am happy to say I am one of the few people I know of out of my friends that has beaten it. I still dig out my NES every once in a while to play it. I did not know there were sequels to Shadowgate and Deja Vu. Can you tell me their titles and what system they are for? Thanks!

Dragongod165
via the Internet

*Here's the scoop: Deja Vu II: Lost in Las Vegas came out on home computers and was represented in Deja Vu I & II on Game Boy Color. Shadowgate got an uninspired 3-D sequel on N64 with Shadowgate 64: Trials of the Four Towers.*

## MAY OUR LOVE BURN LIKE THE RED CANDLE

I'm a huge Zelda fan, and I've been playing the series since the beginning. However, I must say, you guys are starting to get on my nerves with your Zelda fanboyism. You keep complimenting the Zelda series with every chance you get, and you're kinda making the series look bad. Take Halo, for example: it's a

Recently, The Legend of Zelda's oldest fan passed away—my grandpa, age 73, died of lung cancer. He was the biggest Zelda fan anyone could have been. He completed every console version of Zelda and even all the Game Boy versions. It brought him and I closer together in many ways. He would call me to ask how to get a heart piece in Link to the Past, or how to get the Mirror Shield in Ocarina of Time. Sadly, he didn't get to complete Twilight Princess; he got halfway threw the game then couldn't continue any longer because of the cancer. I'm writing this because I don't think I would have been as close to my grandpa if it weren't for Zelda. Yeah, I will miss his calls asking questions on Twilight Princess. I just want to thank Nintendo for creating something so great that it brought my grandpa and me together.

Chris B.
via the Internet

*We wish that more stories like these got printed alongside all those sensationalist news pieces about how video games are the root of all evil. Thanks for sharing your memories, Chris, and we hope you remember to pass on the love when you're older and have your own grandchildren.*

good game and all, but its fans make it sound absolutely amazing. But when people actually get around to playing it, they're severely disappointed because it's not nearly as good as the fans make it out to be. I've been reading Nintendo Power for a while now, and after being exposed to your blatant Zelda fanboy-ism, I would like to politely ask you to cut it out. I don't want Zelda to go down the same road as Halo.

E. N. H.
via the Internet

*We think you're missing the point. We praise great games because they're great, not to convince people that they're better than they are. Zelda is one of the best video game series of all time, and our exaltations are meant to reflect only that fact and nothing more.*

## PRIME NUMBERS

I'm looking forward to Metroid Prime 3: Corruption. It looks so cool from the trailers I've seen on the Internet. However, I believe you are improperly calling it Metroid Prime 3. Metroid Prime and Metroid Prime 2 Echoes were named properly, and they were great games. But, in between Prime 2 and Prime 3, there was Prime Pinball and Prime Hunters, which I believe should be 3 and 4. This new Metroid Prime game should be called Metroid Prime 5: Corruption. Please explain to me why this game is called Prime 3.

Nick
via the Internet

*Actually, it's the third game in a continuing story. The other "Prime" games you mention are offshoots of the trilogy.*

## MONONOKE IS *BEGGING* FOR A STRATEGY-RPG

When is Nintendo going to make games based on the magical worlds of filmmaker Hayao Miyazaki? The Wii seems like a perfect match! Imagine holding the Wii remote as though it were Totoro's umbrella, flying this way and that. Pull some strings with Japan and make it happen!

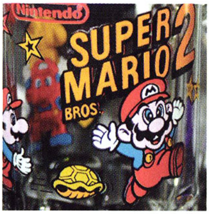
Eric
via the Internet

*We wish we had those strings, because we would pull them in an instant. For now, check out LostMagic for DS—art director Yoshiharu Sato is one of Miyazaki's main animators. Check Volume 203 for details.*

## BIG MUG O' MARIO

I bought this cup from a garage sale for 25 cents and was wondering if you had any info on it.

Kristopher M.
via the Internet



*In all likelihood, it's not worth more than the quarter you paid. But wow, those are cool—it gives us something to look for at antique stores now!*

## JETPACKS, HERE WE COME!

In Volume 218, Lianne Z. wrote in to inform you of an error you made, mistaking "than" for "then." In what I found to be a striking bit of irony, your response included another error. You printed "a erroneous" when it should have been "an erroneous." I don't know how much jetpacks cost, but you're a quarter nearer to your goal.

Joshua E.
via the Internet

*If we told you we put these mistakes in on purpose just so we could fly to work, would you believe us?*

## FOR THOSE ABOUT TO ROCK

I went to some websites to get the release date for Jam Sessions, and all the places disagreed—I saw June, July, or September as release dates. Can you tell me the exact date? My brother and I want to have a contest to see who can play the best: him on a guitar or me on a DS (although I know me on the DS would win hands down!).

Tommy A.
via the Internet

*It looks like the release date for Jam Sessions got pushed back after Andy's article appeared in Vol. 217. Get ready to rock your brother's socks off this September.*

## AGE DON'T MEAN A THING

The Wii Calendar only goes up to December, 2035. What will happen if we reach that point 28 years from now? Can Nintendo run a system update for that?

Scott C.
via the Internet

*Don't worry—by then you'll be playing Wii games as Virtual Console titles.*

## CORRECTOR'S CORNER

I was reading your Game Watch Forecast section in Volume 218 and was happy to see that you had added Brain Age 2: More Training in Minutes a Day. But you put it in the wrong category! It is listed as In Development in the Wii section, but it's actually being released on the DS. Otherwise, great issue!

Cameron S.
via the Internet

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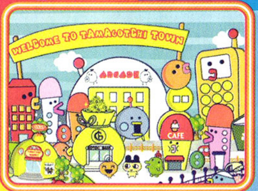

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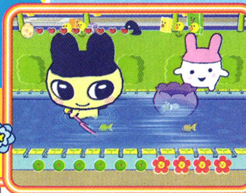

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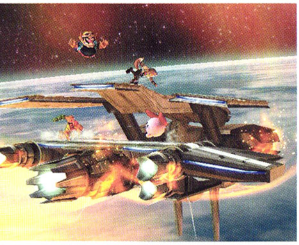
# MOST WANTED

As voted by the readers. Go to nintendo.com/mostwanted and let your voice be heard!



### >Wii

1. Super Smash Bros. Brawl
2. Metroid Prime 3: Corruption
3. Super Mario Galaxy
4. Fire Emblem
5. Resident Evil: Umbrella Chronicles

### >NINTENDO DS

1. The Legend of Zelda: Phantom Hourglass
2. Sonic Rush Adventure
3. Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney Trials and Tribulations
4. FINAL FANTASY Crystal Chronicles: Ring of Fates
5. FINAL FANTASY XII: Revenant Wings

## TOP SELLERS

### >Wii

This month's top seller proves what we already knew—Wii owners like to party. Several movie spin-offs crack the top 10, as well.

1. Mario Party 8
2. Wii Play
3. Super Paper Mario
4. The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess
5. Spider-Man 3
6. Tiger Woods PGA Tour 07
7. WarioWare: Smooth Moves
8. Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End
9. Shrek the Third
10. Cooking Mama: Cook Off

## TOP SELLERS

### >NINTENDO DS

Even after several months, the Pokémon games are going strong. It's gonna be a good summer for your Bidoof.

1. Pokémon Diamond
2. Pokémon Pearl
3. Spider-Man 3
4. New Super Mario Bros.
5. Shrek the Third
6. Mario Kart DS
7. Brain Age: Train Your Brain in Minutes a Day
8. Diddy Kong Racing
9. Naruto: Ninja Council 3
10. Cooking Mama

### >VIRTUAL CONSOLE—TURBOGRAFX16 DOWNLOADS TO DATE

As far as Bomberman games go, '93 is one of the best iterations. Still, it's surprising that Bonk, the Turbografx16's frontman, hasn't been the top dog on Virtual Console so far.

1. Bomberman '93
2. Bonk's Adventure
3. Dungeon Explorer
4. Splatterhouse
5. R-Type

Sales data courtesy of the NPDFunworld TRSTS Video Game Source.

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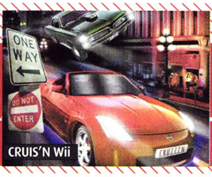
GUILTY AS CHARGED

NIGHT FALLS

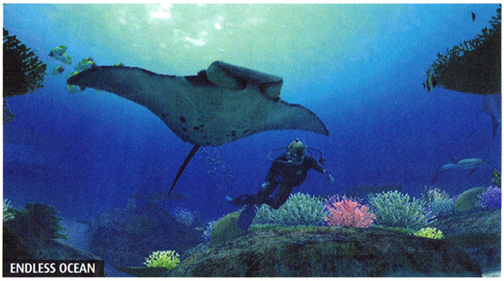

CRUIS'N Wii

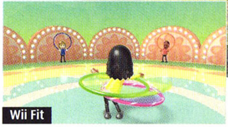
E3 PREVIEW

# Coming Attractions

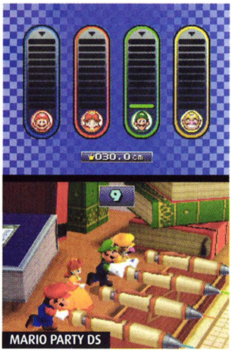
**Nintendo looks to continue its momentum with a diverse lineup of new titles for Wii and DS. Prepare to get fit, explore the deep blue sea, and go kartin'.**

**The coming months are** going to be very busy for Wii and DS owners. Adding to an already stacked lineup that includes Metroid Prime 3: Corruption, Super Mario Galaxy, Super Smash Bros. Brawl, and The Legend of Zelda: Phantom Hourglass, Nintendo has announced a number of new titles that will be headed to North America over the remainder of 2007 and early 2008. For Wii, the company will publish Endless Ocean, a unique underwater exploration title known as Forever Blue in Japan; Mario Kart Wii, the latest installment in the venerable racing series; and Wii Fit, which comes with a wireless peripheral that you stand on while performing various fitness-based activities. The DS will play host to the multiplayer hijinx of Mario Party DS, and developer Level-5's puzzle-heavy mystery adventure Professor Layton and the Curious Village. Details are scarce, but we'll have more information on all of these titles in next month's issue. —Steve T.

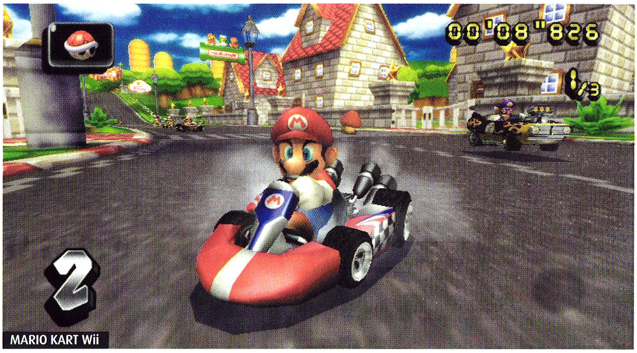

ENDLESS OCEAN


Wii Fit

Hoop Twirl (one of the Aerobic Exercise activities)



MARIO PARTY DS



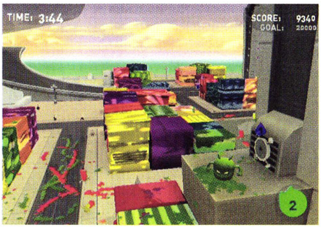
MARIO KART Wii

RAINBOW RENEGADE

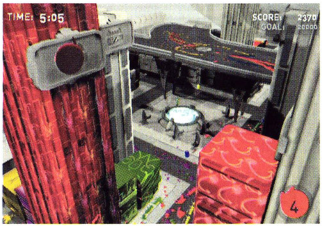
# In Living Color

**Use the power of color to revive the world and challenge an evil corporation in THQ's de Blob, coming exclusively to Wii and DS.**

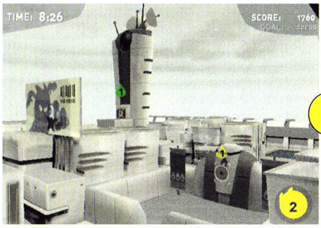
**A world without color,** according to THQ, is a world without fun, which is why it's your job to restore both in de Blob, an innovative action/puzzle/platform game headed to Wii and DS in early 2008. de Blob's premise is simple: the fascist I.N.K.T. Corporation has sucked the color out of Chroma City and turned the populace into zombielike drones, so it's up to you to take control of the hero known as de Blob and liberate the metropolis by painting the town red (or whatever color you choose). As you bound through the environments (you jump by flicking the Wii remote or the DS's stylus in the desired direction) you'll add color to any building you come in contact with. And by collecting canisters of paint you'll be able to create new colors (essential for painting landmarks their required hues) and increase your ability to stick to vertical surfaces; you can even jump from wall to wall. As you paint buildings you'll earn points and unlock new regions of the city, each with different challenges and more enemies (which you can squash with lock-on jumping attacks). In addition to a 17-level single-player game, de Blob will offer multiplayer action for up to four players. —**Chris H.**



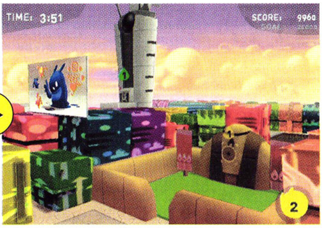
Colors, colors everywhere. When you're de Blob, the entire city is your canvas, and you're the brush.



That pool of water isn't just for decoration—you can use it to clean yourself off if enemies blast you with ink.



The city starts out bleak and monochromatic, devoid of freedom or color.



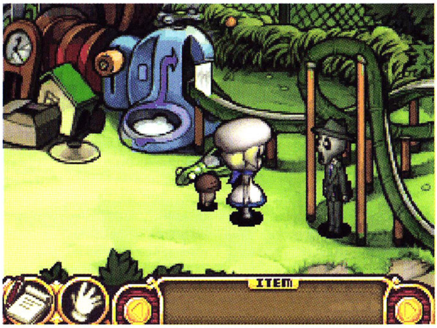
But once de Blob works his magic with a few coats of paint, the cityscape springs back to life.

MORE MORBID CURIOSITY

# Get a Clue (and a Half)

**Young detective Mackenzie is back to solve an all-new quirky caseload in Atlus's Touch Detective 2 ½ for DS. Seriously: 2 ½.**

**Nope, you haven't** missed anything—Touch Detective 2 ½ for DS is Atlus's direct sequel to last year's point-and-click sleuthing adventure Touch Detective. We're not sure where the extra half came from, but any way you look at it, the game features more of what was enjoyable about the original (great writing and plentiful puzzles) while eliminating its less-than-endearing traits (for example, interactive objects will be easier to identify). Detective Mackenzie and her sidekick Funghi will encounter familiar and new characters (including the human/rodent duo of Ace and Friday) and twice the number of locations of the first game as they investigate crimes in five new humorously bizarre episodes, all of which are linked by a single overarching storyline. Look for the game in stores this fall. —**Chris H.**



## NEWS BYTES

### BioWare Goes Blue

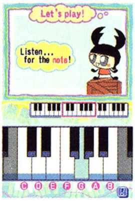
Acclaimed RPG studio teams with Sega for hedgehogian epic.

**Last year, BioWare announced that it was working on an RPG for the DS, but wouldn't share any details about the project. From the "out of left field" department, we now have word that the game will be based on the Sonic the Hedgehog universe. More as we hear it.**

### Music Lessons

Become a maestro with Rhythm 'n Notes on DS.

**If you're tone-deaf like NP's Steve Thomason, then Agetec has just the DS title for you. Rhythm 'n Notes is coming this fall, offering a variety of fun, educational piano and drumming minigames aimed at all musical skill levels.**



### CIV 2008

When civilizations clash, strategy gamers win.

**Famed game designer Sid Meier describes Civilization Revolution (coming in spring 2008) as the game he's always wanted to make. With 16 civilizations, historical leaders, and uniquely immersive action, it sounds like the Civilization we've always wanted to play.**

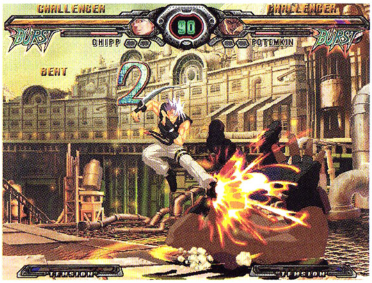
JOIN THE CORE

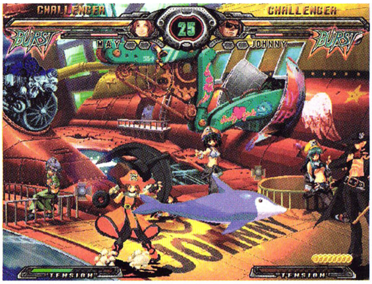
# Guilty Pleasure

The flashiest, most technical 2-D fighting series around comes to Wii courtesy of Aksys Games in the form of Guilty Gear XX Accent Core.

**The Guilty Gear games** have been thrilling hardcore 2-D fighting purists for nearly a decade, and this October players will be able to enjoy the franchise on a Nintendo console for the first time with the arrival of Guilty Gear XX Accent Core for Wii. Published by Aksys Games and developed by Arc System Works, Accent Core is the latest upgrade to the deep, technique-filled, beautifully animated one-on-one fighter Guilty Gear XX. Along with all the typical enhancements—new backgrounds, new character voices, and additional warriors—Accent Core will feature Wii-exclusive motion-based controls for executing its wide array of standard attacks, special moves, and super techniques; Classic controller and GameCube controller support will be included as well for those who prefer to play the traditional way.

The entire heavy-metal-inspired cast of more than 20 characters (including the sword-wielding Sol Badguy, bag-wearing Faust, pirate girl May, and lethal-haired Millia) from previous Guilty Gear XX games is returning with adjusted move timing and priorities, so none of them play exactly as they did in earlier titles. In addition, Accent Core adds new play mechanics such as the Force Break (a way to power up your moves), the Slash Back (a type of counterattack), and the ability to escape from throws. Whether or not you've played a Guilty Gear game before, Accent Core promises to take you on a wild ride. —Chris H.



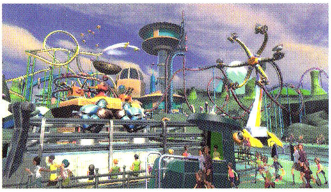


COASTING TO VICTORY

# A Thrill A Minute

LucasArts leaves the Force behind on this wild ride through fantasy theme parks on Wii and DS.

**Thrillville: Off the Rails** takes several pages from the tycoon/theme-park genre of business-management games and combines them with death-defying "WHOA Coasters" that leap from track to track, fly through fire, and blast off like rocket ships. Building on the success of last year's PS2 debut of Thrillville, the Off the Rails sequel will make full use of the Wii remote and the DS touch screen for creating coasters and playing 34 carnival-themed minigames. As you manage your park, you'll interact with guests, customize rides, and experience the rides firsthand. With 100 missions awaiting your skill and creativity, you'll have many minutes of thrills ahead, which are scheduled to begin this coming October. —Scott P.



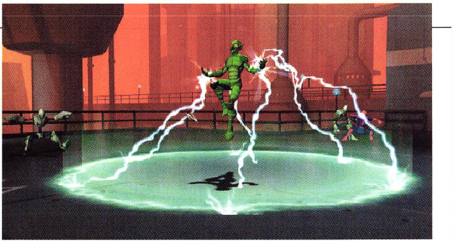
WEB OF LOVE

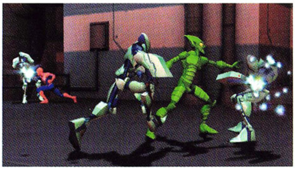
# Spidey's New BFFs

The famed webslinger joins up with some of his old adversaries in Spider-Man: Friend or Foe from Activision and Next Level Games.

**An all-new adventure** that mixes the worlds of the Spider-Man movies and the classic comics is heading to Wii and DS. Weary of spending all their precious time stealing purses and robbing armored trucks, Spider-Man's most notorious foes have decided to join forces with the webbed one to take on a worldwide threat. Well, some of them will take a little "convincing" on Spidey's part—defeat the likes of Venom, Sandman, and the Green Goblin to have them fight alongside our hero. Allies such as Blade and Iron Fist will also show up for a little action.

An innovative co-op mode allows two players to fight side by side—one as Spidey, and the other as one of the many characters from the Spider-Man world. The fisticuffs play out via a new feature-rich battle system. Both versions of the game are slated to swing into stores later this fall. —Chris S.



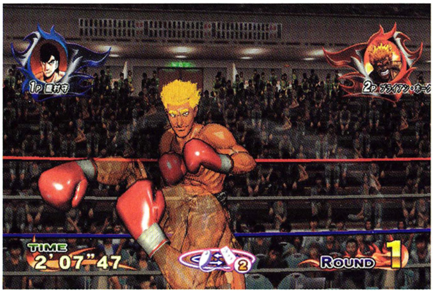


This time around, Spider-Man gets a little help from his . . . friends?

SKETCHY CHARACTERS

# A Briefing on Boxers

Victorious Boxers: Revolution, a game based on a long-running manga, tapes up its knuckles and enters the ring with American gamers.



Previous Victorious Boxers games were lauded for their accurate depiction of the sweet science. The Wii remote and nunchuk should add to the experience.

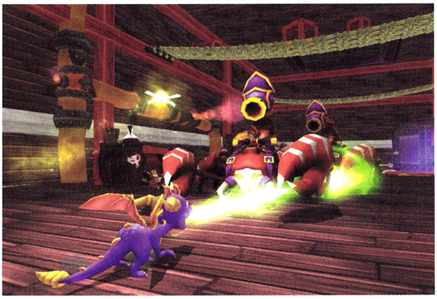
**Few manga fans** in the US are clamoring for a Wii game based on *Hajime no Ippo* by Jyoji Morikawa, but that's exactly what they're going to get come September. Sometimes translated as *Fighting Spirit*, the comic and anime follow the story of Ippo Makunouchi, a nice guy with an iron jaw and the burning desire to become Japan's featherweight champion. After a critically well-received PS2 title appeared in the US in 2001, the franchise vanished off the radar (a sequel was never released here). Now Xseed Games's Victorious Boxers: Revolution will come out swinging with a story-based fighting game that uses an over-the-shoulder perspective (the boxer you control is semi-transparent). The character models sport a cool, hand-drawn look that makes the game seem like the pages of a manga have come to life. —Drew W.

SPYROMANIA

# Hold Your Breath

The once-cutesy dragon faces a new, dark menace in the continuing saga of The Legend of Spyro.

**Spyro the dragon swoops** back into action this fall on Wii, DS, and Game Boy Advance in the second part of the The Legend of Spyro trilogy, subtitled The Eternal Night. Challenged by mysterious visions and Gaul the Ape King, who's bent on plunging the world into darkness, Spyro has his work cut out for him. Fortunately, he has four new breath attacks, new elemental moves and fury attacks, and a not-so-original move called Dragon Time that lets him dodge enemy attacks and solve time-related puzzles. There's no word on if there's a blue pill involved. As in the first The Legend of Spyro game, no expense has been spared on the voice talent; returning to the studio are actors Elijah Wood as Spyro and Gary Oldman as Ignitus, Spyro's mentor. Krome Studios is working on the Wii version while Amaze Entertainment is handling development on the DS and Game Boy Advance. We'll bring you more news on this dragon's tale once we've had a test flight. —Scott P.



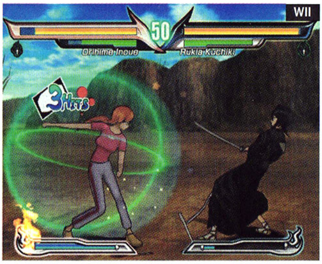
Spyro's Wii debut, scheduled for this fall, will feature new attacks and moves, including every dragon's enemy-toasting favorite flambé.

WHITER WHITES

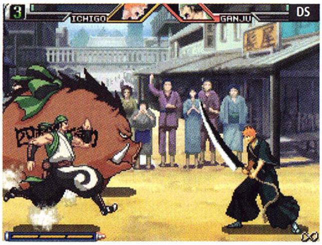
# Wii-Safe Bleach

**Wii and DS titles based on Japan's hugely successful anime series are finally arriving on US shores.**

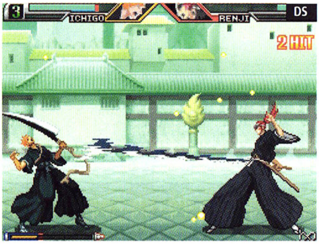
**Tite Kubo's *Bleach* has everything** shonen manga fans love. A pubescent boy with supernatural powers who wields an absurdly large sword? Check! Winsome teenage girls in jeopardy? Check! Plenty of ghosts and demons to fight? Check! Although Sega has released a pile of Bleach titles in Japan, US fans have had to content themselves with import games and the unflagging belief that the anime would eventually become a hit stateside. Now that Bleach has been added to Cartoon Network's growing anime lineup, the floodgates have opened, at least for Nintendo systems: both the Wii and the DS will see a Bleach game—each named Bleach—this fall. Unsurprisingly, both are fighting games—but don't write them off as mere cash-in titles just yet. The Wii game, developed by Polygon Magic, has the cel-shaded look of the anime, scads of unlockable content, and 32 (!) playable characters. The DS game was developed by the legendary game studio Treasure. Need we say more? The Japanese version of the Treasure game was a big enough hit in Japan to yield a popular sequel, so we're looking forward to its appearance on this side of the Pacific. —Drew W.



The Wii version of Bleach follows branching story lines from eight episodes of the anime.



Treasure knows a thing or two about making 2-D combat games. Bleach on DS should be worth the wait.



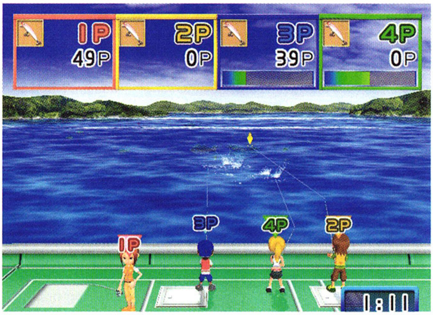
Up to four players can compete on DS via Wi-Fi. The game also supports single-card download play.

CATCH (AND RELEASE) 'EM ALL

# Deep Wii Fishing

**Hudson Soft hopes to hook Wii owners with Fishing Master, a unique motion-controlled fishing experience.**

**Fishing games on Wii are** nothing new—by the time the holiday season rolls around, we'll have three, not including The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess. What makes Fishing Master stand out, though, is that it strays from the realism of most sports games and takes on an anime-influenced look. With the Wii remote representing your fishing rod and the nunchuk representing your reel, you'll visit more than 30 locations, both freshwater and saltwater, to catch over 100 different species of fish, from your standard trout to the rare goblin shark. (That's a real fish, by the way.) Despite the game's younger look, it will have plenty of strategy, with multiple rods and more than 30 types of bait at your disposal. Expect Fishing Master to come ashore this September. —Andy M.



In addition to a single-player tournament mode, up to four players can battle it out in a head-to-head fishing derby.

MAKE YOUR OWN JOKES

# The New Cock of the Walk

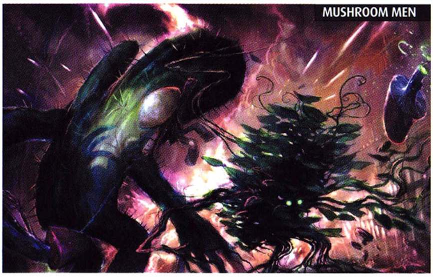
**Indy publisher Gamecock gives rise to a threesome of original titles for Wii and DS.**

**Earlier this year,** former executives from Gathering of Developers established a new publishing outfit called Gamecock Media Group. Like G.O.D., Gamecock will focus on original titles from independent developers, and the company already has a number of Nintendo-platform efforts on its release slate.

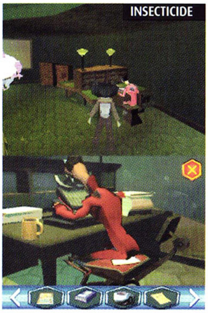
Dementium: The Ward is a mature-themed survival-horror adventure about a man who wakes up in a dilapidated hospital inhabited by grotesque surgical experiments. The game boasts some impressive 3-D for a DS title, and a dynamic, real-time flashlight should help in scaring the bejeezus out of players.

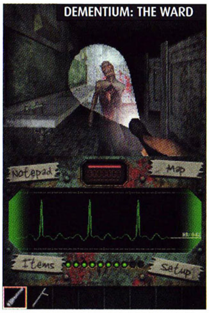
Another DS title, Insecticide, will put your detective skills to the test as you try to solve a murder mystery in a future where bugs have evolved as the planet's dominant race. The game combines weapons-based action with adventure elements such as gathering clues and interrogating suspects.

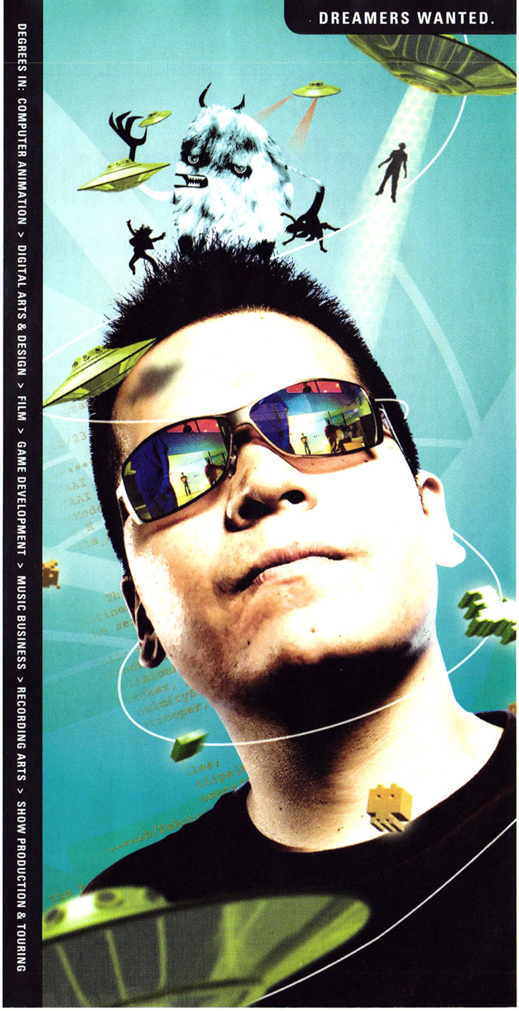
Finally, Mushroom Men for Wii and DS centers around the conflict between two warring spore factions. The game's diminutive hero possesses a number of unique spore-based powers, and can transform househould trinkets into various weapons and tools. —Steve T.



No screenshots have been released for Mushroom Men yet (it's not due until 2008), but we're definitely digging the weird art style.



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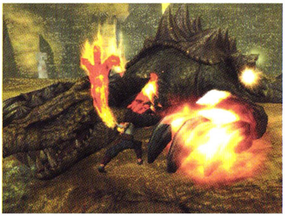
FUN WITH DRAGONS

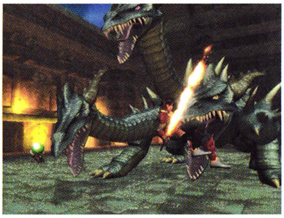
# Fight Fire with Fire

## Wii action heats up with Dragon Blade: Wrath of Fire, an exclusive hack-'em-up adventure from publisher D3.

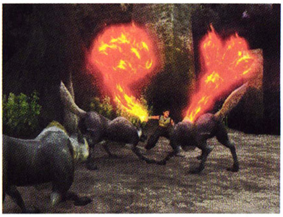
**Battling gigantic dragons** with a sword made of fire? Sign me up! Dragon Blade: Wrath of Fire puts you in a world created by famed fantasy author Richard A. Knaak, in which evil dragons have scorched the land and humans are on the run. As the son of an ancient king and the wielder of a powerful blade, it's up to you to slay the wicked creatures and save the world. The third-person adventure has a strong emphasis on combat, which revolves around your sword, the Dragon Blade. Throughout six massive worlds, you'll find sword fragments that allow you to temporarily transform the blade into different fire-infused weapons. These include a dragon tail that takes the form of a fiery whip, and even a giant dragon head that can breathe fire. Each weapon has its own motion-control scheme and can be used as part of a combo attack against the hordes of enemies you'll face, from lesser beasts to giant dragon bosses. Fans of fantasy games should definitely put Dragon Blade on their radar—it's being developed by Land Ho!, a team that includes folks who have worked on the popular Panzer Dragoon series. The Wii-exclusive title is scheduled to hit store shelves this fall. —Andy M.



Extend your reach by transforming your blade into a fiery dragon claw!



Why slay a one-headed dragon when you can slay a three-headed dragon?



Making a clapping motion with the Wii remote and nunchuk crushes enemies between your claws.

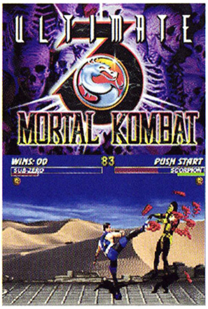
FINISH LINE

# Cruis'n and a Bruisin'

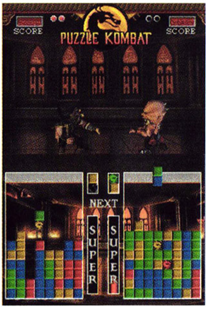
## Wii and DS gear up for two classic arcade titles from Midway: Ultimate Mortal Kombat for DS and Cruis'n for Wii.

**Midway has announced a** pair of legacy updates to heat up the winter months. Ultimate Mortal Kombat packs two game modes into a DS card—the first is a faithful miniaturization of the arcade hit Ultimate Mortal Kombat 3; the second is Puzzle Kombat, MK's take on the puzzle genre featured in Mortal Kombat Deception. Both components will utilize the DS's wireless connectivity to its fullest extent: ad-hoc head-to-head competition, including single-card play (multi-card play allows for greater character selection) and Internet matches via Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection. Look for UMK to rock the DS in November.

The Wii is also getting some Midway love: a new Cruis'n title is heading to the console later this year. Get ready to roll with Wii-remote steering controls and monster upgrades. —Chris S.



Scorpion's never gonna get those stains out of his tunic.



They're not just falling blocks; they're *deadly* falling blocks.

# GAME WATCH FORECAST

Heading into E3, both Wii and DS continue to pick up steam with tons of new game announcements. And publishers still aren't finished; expect more surprises in the months ahead.

Announced
In Development
Ready for Release

Game Title — Publisher — ●●●
Game Title — Publisher — 🔴🔴🔴 —New games added to the list

## Wii

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Agatha Christie: And Then There Were None | The Adventure Company | ●●○ |
| Alien Syndrome | Sega | ●●● |
| Avatar: The Last Airbender: The Burning Earth | THQ | 🔴🔴○ |
| Battalion Wars 2 | Nintendo | ●●○ |
| Ben 10: Protector of Earth | D3PA | ●○○ |
| Big Brain Academy: Wii Degree | Nintendo | ●●● |
| Billy the Wizard | Conspiracy | 🔴🔴○ |
| Blast Works: Build, Fuse & Destroy | Majesco | 🔴🔴○ |
| Bleach | Sega | 🔴🔴○ |
| Blitz: The League | Midway | ●●○ |
| Boogie | Electronic Arts | ●●○ |
| Bratz: The Movie | THQ | 🔴🔴○ |
| Brothers in Arms: Double Time | Ubisoft | ●●○ |
| Brunswick Pro Bowling | Crave | ●●● |
| Carnival Games | Global Star | ●●○ |
| Cars: Mater-National | THQ | 🔴🔴○ |
| Code Lyoko | The Game Factory | ●●○ |
| Cosmic Family | Ubisoft | ●●○ |
| Counter Force | Conspiracy | ●●○ |
| Crash of the Titans | Sierra | ●●○ |
| Cruisi'n | Midway | 🔴○○ |
| Dance Dance Revolution Hottest Party | Konami | ●●○ |
| Dave Mirra BMX Challenge | Crave | ●●○ |
| de Blob | THQ | 🔴🔴○ |
| Destiny of Zorro | TBD | ●●○ |
| Dewy's Adventure | Konami | ●●○ |
| Disaster: Day of Crisis | Nintendo | ●●○ |
| Dragon Blade: Wrath of Fire | D3PA | 🔴🔴○ |
| Dragon Quest Swords: The Masked Queen and the Tower of Mirrors | Square Enix | ●●○ |
| Driver: Parallel Lines | Ubisoft | ●●● |
| EA Playground | Electronic Arts | ●●○ |
| Emergency Mayhem | Codemasters | ●●○ |
| Endless Ocean | Nintendo | 🔴🔴○ |
| Ferrari Challenge | System 3 | ●○○ |
| FIFA 08 | Electronic Arts | ●●○ |
| Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: The Crystal Bearers | Square Enix | ●●○ |
| Fire Emblem* | Nintendo | ●●○ |
| Fishing Master | Hudson | 🔴🔴○ |
| Furu Furu Park | Majesco | 🔴🔴○ |
| Game Party | Midway | 🔴○○ |
| Geometry Wars: Galaxies | Sierra | ●●○ |
| Ghost Squad | Sega | ●●○ |
| Godzilla: Unleashed | Atari | ●●○ |
| The Golden Compass | Sega | ●○○ |
| Guilty Gear XX Accent Core | Aksys | 🔴🔴○ |
| Harvest Moon Wii* | Natsume | ●●○ |
| The Legend of Spyro: The Eternal Night | Sierra | 🔴🔴○ |
| Legends of the Indy 500 | Destineer | ●●○ |
| LEGO Batman: The Videogame | Warner Bros. Interactive | ●○○ |
| LEGO *Star Wars*: The Complete Saga | LucasArts | ●●○ |
| Line Rider | inXile | ●○○ |
| Looney Tunes: Acme Arsenal | Warner Bros. Interactive | ●●○ |
| Madden NFL 08 | Electronic Arts | ●●○ |
| Manhunt 2 | Rockstar | ●●○ |
| Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Games | Sega | ●●○ |
| Mario Strikers Charged | Nintendo | ●●● |
| Metroid Prime 3: Corruption | Nintendo | ●●○ |
| Mushroom Men | Gamecock | 🔴○○ |
| MySims | Electronic Arts | ●●○ |
| My Word Coach | Ubisoft | ●●○ |
| Namco Museum Remix | Namco Bandai | ●●○ |
| Naruto: Clash of Ninja Revolution | D3PA/Tomy | ●●○ |
| NBA Live 08 | Electronic Arts | ●●○ |
| Need for Speed ProStreet | Electronic Arts | ●●○ |
| Nicktoons: Attack of the Toybots | THQ | 🔴🔴○ |
| NiGHTS: Journey of Dreams | Sega | ●●○ |
| Ninjabread Man | Conspiracy | ●●○ |
| One Piece: Unlimited Adventure | Namco Bandai | ●●○ |
| Opoona | Koei | ●●○ |
| Pinball Hall of Fame: The Williams Collection | Crave | ●●○ |
| Project H.A.M.M.E.R. | Nintendo | ●●○ |
| Rayman Raving Rabbids 2 | Ubisoft | ●●○ |
| Resident Evil: The Umbrella Chronicles | Capcom | ●●○ |
| Rock 'n Roll Adventures | Conspiracy | 🔴○○ |
| Samurai Slash* | Koei | ●●○ |
| Soulcalibur Legends | Namco Bandai | ●●○ |
| Space Station Tycoon | Namco Bandai | ●●○ |
| Spider-Man: Friend or Foe | Activision | 🔴🔴○ |
| SpongeBob's Atlantis SquarePantis | THQ | 🔴🔴○ |
| Super Mario Galaxy | Nintendo | ●●○ |
| Super Smash Bros. Brawl | Nintendo | ●●○ |
| Thrillville: Off the Rails | LucasArts | 🔴○○ |
| Tomb Raider: Anniversary | Eidos | ●●○ |
| Tony Hawk's Proving Ground | Activision | ●●○ |
| Victorious Boxers | Xseed | 🔴🔴○ |
| Wii Fit | Nintendo | 🔴🔴○ |
| World Championship Poker: All In | Crave | ●●○ |
| WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2008 | THQ | ●●○ |
| Zack & Wiki: Quest for Barbaros' Treasure | Capcom | ●●○ |

## NINTENDO DS

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Animal Genius | Scholastic | 🔴🔴○ |
| Avatar: The Last Airbender: The Burning Earth | THQ | 🔴🔴○ |
| B-17: Fortress in the Sky | Destination | ●○○ |
| Balls of Fury | Destination | 🔴🔴○ |
| The Bee Game | Midway | 🔴○○ |
| Ben 10: Protector of Earth | D3PA | ●○○ |
| Biker Mice from Mars | The Game Factory | ●○○ |
| Bleach | Sega | 🔴🔴○ |
| Brain Age 2: More Training in Minutes a Day | Nintendo | ●●○ |
| Bratz Ponyz | The Game Factory | ●●○ |
| Build a Bear | The Game Factory | ●●○ |
| California Games | System 3 | ●●○ |
| Cameltry | TBA | ●●○ |
| Cars: Mater-National | THQ | 🔴🔴○ |
| Chibi-Robo: Park Patrol | Nintendo | ●●○ |
| Chicken Shoot | Destination | ●●○ |
| Chronos Twin | Lexicon | ●●○ |
| Contra 4 | Konami | ●●○ |
| Crash of the Titans | Sierra | ●●○ |
| Deal or No Deal | Destination | ●●○ |
| de Blob | THQ | 🔴○○ |
| Dementium: The Ward | Gamecock | 🔴🔴○ |
| Digimon World: Dawn | Namco Bandai | ●●○ |
| Digimon World: Dusk | Namco Bandai | ●●○ |
| DK: Jungle Climber | Nintendo | ●●○ |
| Dragon Quest IX* | Square Enix | ●●○ |
| Dragon Quest Monsters: Joker | Square Enix | ●●○ |
| Drake & Josh | THQ | ●○○ |
| Drawn to Life | THQ | ●●○ |
| DS Air* | Nintendo | ●●○ |
| Dynasty Warriors DS: Fighter's Battle | Koei | ●●● |
| Europa Universalis II | Pocket PC | ●●○ |
| Ferrari Challenge | System 3 | ●●○ |
| Final Fantasy IV | Square Enix | ●●○ |
| Final Fantasy XII: Revenant Wings | Square Enix | ●●○ |
| Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: Ring of Fates | Square Enix | ●●○ |
| Final Fantasy Tactics A2 | Square Enix | ●●○ |
| Fish Tycoon | Majesco | 🔴🔴○ |
| Foster's Home for Imaginary Friends: Imagination Invasion | Midway | 🔴🔴○ |
| Front Mission | Square Enix | ●●○ |
| Fullmetal Alchemist Trading Card Game | Destineer | ●●● |
| Garfield's Nightmare | The Game Factory | ●●○ |
| Geometry Wars: Galaxies | Sierra | ●●○ |
| Godzilla Unleashed | Atari | ●●○ |
| The Golden Compass | Sega | ●○○ |
| GoPets | Konami | ●●○ |
| Heroes of Mana | Square Enix | ●●● |
| High School Musical: Makin' the Cut | Disney Int. | 🔴🔴○ |
| Impossible Mission | System 3 | ●●○ |
| Indiana Jones 2007* | LucasArts | ●○○ |
| Insecticide | Gamecock | 🔴🔴○ |
| I Spy: Fun House | Scholastic | 🔴🔴○ |
| It's a Wonderful World | Square Enix | ●●○ |
| Jam Sessions | Ubisoft | ●●○ |
| Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights | THQ | 🔴🔴○ |
| Legend of the River King* | Natsume | ●○○ |
| The Legend of Spyro: The Eternal Night | Sierra | 🔴🔴○ |
| The Legend of Zelda: Phantom Hourglass | Nintendo | ●●○ |
| Legends of the Indy 500 | Destineer | ●●○ |
| Line Rider | inXile | ●○○ |
| Looney Tunes: Duck Amuck | Warner Bros. Interactive | ●●○ |
| Luminous Arc | Atlus | ●●● |
| Mario Party DS | Nintendo | 🔴🔴○ |
| Mega Man Star Force | Capcom | ●●○ |
| Mega Man ZX Advent | Capcom | ●●○ |
| Mushroom Men | Gamecock | 🔴○○ |
| MySims | Electronic Arts | ●●○ |
| My Word Coach | Ubisoft | ●●○ |
| Namco Museum DS | Namco Bandai | ●●○ |
| Nanostray 2 | TBD | ●●○ |
| Naruto: Path of the Ninja | D3PA/Tomy | ●○○ |
| Need for Speed ProStreet | Electronic Arts | ●●○ |
| Nervous Brickdown | Eidos | ●●● |
| Nicktoons: Attack of the Toybots | THQ | 🔴🔴○ |
| Ninja Gaiden: Dragon Sword | Tecmo | ●●○ |
| Operation: Vietnam | Majesco | 🔴🔴○ |
| Original Frisbee Disc Sports: Ultimate & Golf | Destination | ●●○ |
| Panzer Tactics DS* | CDV Software | ●●○ |
| Pet Alien | The Game Factory | ●●● |
| Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney Trials and Tribulations | Capcom | ●●○ |
| Picross DS | Nintendo | ●●● |
| Power Rangers: Super Legends | Disney Int. | 🔴🔴○ |
| Prism: Light the Way | Eidos | ●●● |
| Professional Fisherman's Tour: Northern Hempisphere | UFO Int. | ●●● |
| Professor Layton and the Curious Village | Nintendo | 🔴🔴○ |
| Puzzle de Harvest Moon | Natsume | ●●○ |
| Race Driver: Create & Race | Codemasters | ●●● |
| Rayman Raving Rabbids 2 | Ubisoft | 🔴🔴○ |
| Rhythm 'n Notes | Agetec | 🔴🔴○ |
| Rune Factory: A Fantasy Harvest Moon | Natsume | ●●● |
| Sonic RPG* | Sega | 🔴○○ |
| Sonic Rush Adventure | Sega | ●●○ |
| Spider-Man: Friend or Foe | Activision | 🔴🔴○ |
| SpongeBob's Atlantis SquarePantis | THQ | 🔴🔴○ |
| Spy-Q | Eidos | ●●○ |
| *Star Wars*: The Force Unleashed | LucasArts | ●○○ |
| The Suite Life of Lack & Cody: Circle of Spies | Disney Int. | 🔴🔴○ |
| Thrillville: Off the Rails | LucasArts | 🔴○○ |
| Tony Hawk's Proving Ground | Activision | ●●○ |
| Touch Detective 2 1/2 | Atlus | 🔴🔴○ |
| Touchmaster | Midway | ●●● |
| Transformers: Autobots | Activision | ●●● |
| Transformers: Decepticons | Activision | ●●● |
| Turn it Around | Majesco | ●●○ |
| Ultimate Brain Games | Telegames | ●●○ |
| Ultimate Card Games | Telegames | ●●○ |
| Ultimate Puzzle Games: Sudoku Edition | Telegames | ●●● |
| Ultimate Mortal Kombat | Midway | 🔴🔴○ |
| Undercover: Dual Motives | Anaconda | ●○○ |
| Warhammer 40K: Squad Command | THQ | 🔴🔴○ |
| The Wild West | Majesco | 🔴🔴○ |
| Worms: Open Warfare 2 | THQ | ●●○ |
| WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2008 | THQ | ●●○ |
| Zoey 101 | THQ | ●○○ |

* Tentative title

## BITS OF TID

### Robots in Your Pants

Target offers exclusive 'bots for Transformers DS.

If you bring your DS and copy of Transformers to select Target retailers, you can download secret characters that you won't find anywhere else. The Autobot edition gets Skydive, while the Decepticons add G1 Starscream to their ranks.

### Hammer Time

THQ deploys Warhammer 40K to DS.

Based on the popular tabletop game from Games Workshop, Warhammer 40K: Squad Command mixes action-packed combat with real-time strategy as players lead a group of Space Marines against the daemonic forces of Chaos.

### Mario Goes to the Dogs

Corgi to produce Nintendo collectibles.

Collectibles manufacturer Corgi International Limited announced that it's acquired the license to produce a variety of toys based on Nintendo properties—such as Super Mario Bros., The Legend of Zelda, and Donkey Kong—through 2010. Look for action figures, playsets, plush and vinyl dolls, and more.

FRIENDS AREN'T DISPOSABLE.
If your friend is doing drugs or drinking, bring them back.
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# Wii Channels

## We Now Interrupt Our Regular Programming . . .

Now that Virtual Console has cruised past the 100-game mark, we asked the writers to cough up their top choices among the VC offerings so far. Their answers will not amaze you.

Our Favorite Games

# WARE NEW GAMES ARE BORN

See that WiiWare button on the right side of the Wii Shop Channel menu? Pretty soon it's going to be for a lot more than downloading the Opera Web browser and the occasional new channel. In June, Nintendo announced a new initiative that will let game developers big and small create affordable brand-new games that users will be able to download as WiiWare. The idea behind WiiWare: to let creators' imaginations run wild, uninhibited by the production costs of bigger games or the limited shelf space of retail stores.

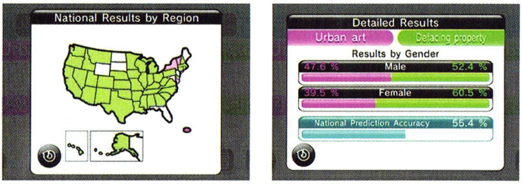
"Independent developers armed with small budgets and big ideas will be able to get their original games into the marketplace to see if we can find the next smash hit," stated Nintendo of America president Reggie Fils-Aime in a press release. "WiiWare brings new levels of creativity and value to the ever-growing population of Wii owners."

Like other Wii titles, WiiWare games will be able to take advantage of Wii's unique features, such as the motion-based controls of the remote and nunchuk, or opt to use the Classic or GameCube controllers. And as with Virtual Console releases, you'll be able to download the games using Wii Points and save them to the Wii's internal memory. The price structure for WiiWare games hasn't been decided yet, but numerous pricing options will be available.

If all goes according to plan, WiiWare could give birth to a renaissance in indie game development and just might result in some of Wii's most innovative titles. We'll find out when the first WiiWare games hit in early 2008.

# GET ME SOME WEIRDNESS, STAT!

On the surface, the Everybody Votes Channel (EVC) may seem a little boring to the average gamer. But listen up, average gamer: you may change your tune if you'd spend a little time with the bizarre, online statistics generator. The EVC asks Wii owners to choose between two answers to a simple question. After they vote, participants are asked to predict the results, represented by a color-coded lollipop (I'm not making this up). People are also asked to submit questions, which can lead to some rather strange subject matter—and even stranger polling results. Using sophisticated statistical analysis, we've drawn a few conclusions about North American Wii owners (see the list to the right). You need to participate to see the poll results, so—as they say back home in Chicago—vote early and vote often.



47.6 % Male 52.4 %

39.5 % Female 60.5 %

National Prediction Accuracy 55.4 %

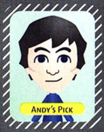
Color-coded poll results allow you to pick up a ton of interesting information at a glance. For example, pink represents people who think graffiti is art. Green shows people who hate it.

- Should a Puerto Rican come across a genie, he won't agonize over wish choices. Health matters more than money in the Caribbean, apparently.
- If you live in North Carolina, you probably couldn't care less about spotting Bigfoot.
- Most people in the US would teach their dogs to speak if they could, but a surprising number of Alaskans and Mainers would rather teach their dogs to read.
- Alabaman women are relatively skeptical about life on other planets.
- If you think you are going to need a kidney in the near future, your best bet is to make friends with a woman in Utah.

# FANBOYS GONE WILD

It doesn't take much prodding to elicit opinions about classic games from the NP writing staff (it would require an act of Congress to make them all agree on a place to eat lunch, however). Now that there is a pile of choices on Virtual Console, each writer was asked for their top picks from the current crop. There are still many classic games in the pipeline (some huge, new games may even make an appearance on the Shop Channel before this issue reaches you), so the following list is by no means the final word on the best retro gaming. However, if you want to hook up your classic controller and get your retro fix right now, then you can't go wrong with any of the choices below.

## VIRTUAL CONSOLE GAMES WE RECOMMEND



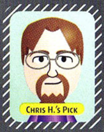
### SUPER MARIO BROS. NES

OTHER GREAT GAMES:

- SPLATTERHOUSE TURBOGRAFX16
- THE LEGEND OF KAGE NES
- TECMO BOWL NES
- DR. ROBOTNIK'S MEAN BEAN MACHINE SEGA GENESIS

MARIO
024850
x11
WORLD
1-2
TIME
023

I'm going to be Mr. Obvious here and go with Super Mario Bros. for my number-one pick. But, if you're itching to play a frantic two-player puzzle game on Wii, look no further than Dr. Robotnik's Mean Bean Machine, a worthy substitute for the still-absent Dr. Mario.



### THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: A LINK TO THE PAST SUPER NES

OTHER GREAT GAMES:

- GOLDEN AXE SEGA GENESIS
- ACTRAISER SUPER NES
- STREETS OF RAGE 2 SEGA GENESIS
- THE LEGEND OF THE MYSTICAL NINJA SUPER NES

The 16-bit era of gaming was truly a golden age as far as I'm concerned. Virtual Console provides a perfect opportunity to replay titles like Golden Axe, ActRaiser, Streets of Rage 2, Zelda, and Mystical Ninja—or experience them for the first time if you missed them back in the day.

Steve's Pick

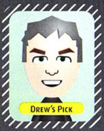
### TOEJAM & EARL SEGA GENESIS

OTHER GREAT GAMES:

- GUNSTAR HEROES SEGA GENESIS
- SONIC THE HEDGEHOG SEGA GENESIS
- SUPER MARIO WORLD SUPER NES
- BONK'S ADVENTURE TURBOGRAFX16

ToeJam is a Wiener
Earl is a Wiener

For quality co-op gaming, it's still tough to beat Genesis classics ToeJam & Earl and Gunstar Heroes. Virtual Console is also home to a lot of great platformers, foremost among them the three heavy hitters of the 16-bit war. There's something very cool about having Sonic, Mario, and Bonk on the same console.

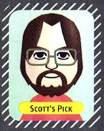


### THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: OCARINA OF TIME N64

OTHER GREAT GAMES:

- GUNSTAR HEROES SEGA GENESIS
- SUPER MARIO WORLD SUPER NES
- SONIC THE HEDGEHOG SEGA GENESIS
- STAR FOX 64 N64

The Wind Waker is my favorite Zelda title, but Ocarina is the game that made me a believer. It's an easy (and lame) choice for a recommendation—it tops pretty much every "All-Time Best" list. But Shepperd jumped on Gunstar Heroes before Steve and I had a chance to claim it.



### ACTRAISER SUPER NES

OTHER GREAT GAMES:

- THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: A LINK TO THE PAST SUPER NES
- TECMO BOWL NES
- NINJA GAIDEN NES
- SIMCITY SUPER NES

My list is filled with titles from the NES and Super NES days that I've not played in a long time. Enix's ActRaiser combines both the action and creation elements of games that I love most, so it tops the list. Tecmo Bowl is simple fun, and Ninja Gaiden is there just to see if I'm still equal to the challenge.

Chris S.'s Pick

### GUNSTAR HEROES SEGA GENESIS

OTHER GREAT GAMES:

- NINJA GAIDEN NES
- TOEJAM & EARL SEGA GENESIS
- ORDYNE TURBOGRAFX16
- THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: A LINK TO THE PAST SUPER NES

I grew up in a strict Nintendo household—Mario was practically my babysitter in junior high. Now that I'm on my own and no longer predisposed to hate Sega, I've taken to some of the classics I never played as a kid. It's amazing how well Gunstar Heroes stands the test of time.

Dancing, drawing, training, patrolling . . . oh, and that plumber fella is back, too.

Brain Age 2: More Training in Minutes a Day Pg. 30
Chibi-Robo: Park Patrol Pg. 32
Dance Dance Revolution Hottest Party Pg. 35
Donkey Kong: Barrel Blast Pg. 29
Drawn to Life Pg. 34
Flash Focus: Vision Training in Minutes a Day Pg. 32
Namco Museum Remix Pg. 36
Naruto: Path of the Ninja Pg. 35
NiGHTS: Journey of Dreams Pg. 31
Operation: Vietnam Pg. 36
Rayman Raving Rabbids 2 Pg. 33
Super Mario Galaxy Pg. 28
Turn It Around Pg. 33

# Worlds Apart

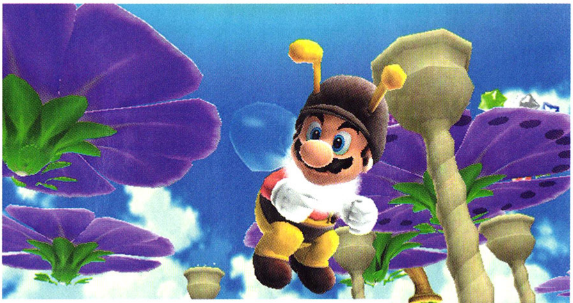
## >SUPER MARIO GALAXY

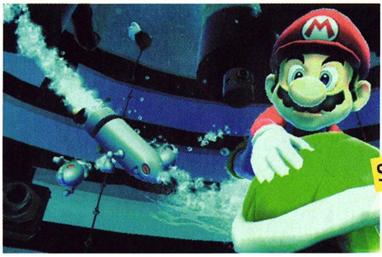
PLATFORM: Wii • PUBLISHER: Nintendo
DEVELOPER: Nintendo • RELEASE: Fall 2007

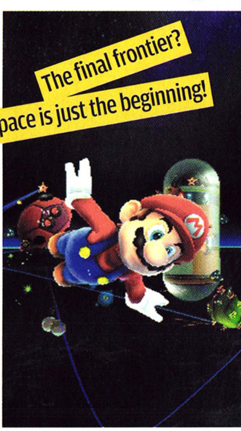
**Ever since it made** its debut at E3 2006, Super Mario Galaxy has been one of the most anticipated games for Wii. After getting our eager hands on the latest playable version of the game, we're pleased to say that it's shaping up beautifully—a perfect blend of traditional 3-D platforming action and Wii-specific innovation. In addition to all the moves you'd expect from a Mario game—triple jumps, wall-kicks, butt-smashes, and more—you can shake either the remote or nunchuk to spin, and point with the remote to interact with some objects. The stars, it seems, are falling from the sky, and you can use the remote's direct-pointing capability to grab them (collect a number of them for a 1-Up), then fire them at enemies by aiming with the remote and pressing the B Button. A second player can even join in (if you have an additional Wii remote) and lend a hand by collecting and firing stars, or—better yet—grab enemies, thus making it easier for Mario to attack them or avoid harm. The new Wii-exclusive abilities are seamlessly integrated into gameplay; spinning to smash crystals, turn screws, climb vines, and clobber enemies feels just as natural as jumping.

As usual, Mario's quest takes him to a wide variety of far-flung locales, but the level design in Galaxy is unlike anything you've experienced before. Some worlds are set in deep space, where Mario travels from planetoid to planetoid, each with its own gravity that allows you to completely circumnavigate the orb. Games that let you walk on the walls or ceiling have always been cool, and Super Mario Galaxy takes the concept to a whole new level. On some planetoids you must collect star fragments before warping to the next; on others you might enter a warp pipe to access the center of the sphere and discover the wonders within. Some worlds, however, are centered around a single large planet that's designed more like the levels of previous 3-D Mario games. Expect all-new takes on familiar themes when you visit a wide variety of worlds. We can't get into the details yet, but trust us—they're awesome.

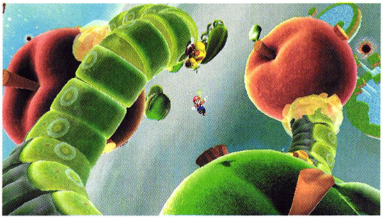
Longtime gamers will especially enjoy the return of some of Mario's famous power-ups, along with a few new ones with transformative properties. One turns Mario into a Boo that can fly and even pass through solid objects, and another turns him into a bee that can hover and cling to certain surfaces. But whether you're a new Wii owner or a die-hard Mario fan, you'll likely find a lot to enjoy in Super Mario Galaxy. Its release date can't come soon enough. —Chris H.

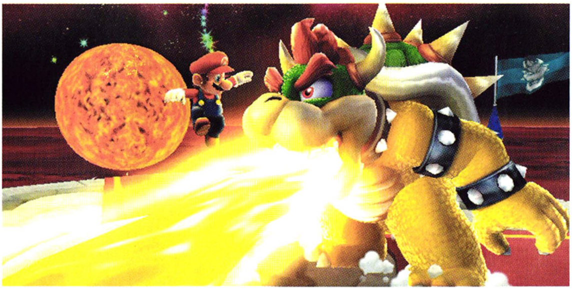






The final frontier? Space is just the beginning!





# Blast from the Past

## >DONKEY KONG: BARREL BLAST

PLATFORM: Wii • PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
DEVELOPER: PAON • RELEASE: SEPTEMBER 2007

**2006's E3 was supposed to be** the last hurrah for the GameCube. Two eye-catching games—a new Paper Mario title and a Donkey Kong racing game that used the GCN bongos—were going to be the Cube's swan song. But something happened on the way to 2007: the Wii exploded onto the gaming scene, and the original plans for those GCN games were scrapped. The first game became the Wii hit Super Paper Mario; now we get to see the new incarnation of the racer in Donkey Kong: Barrel Blast.

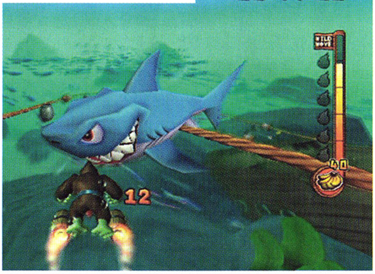
When it was in GameCube development, Barrel Blast used the bongos to steer your kart (actually a couple of barrel-shaped rockets strapped to your waist). You'd bang on the left drum to move left and hit the right drum to move right. The new iteration takes full advantage of the Wii's controls: a quick shake of the nunchuk or the Wii remote takes the place of slapping the bongos. You don't have an accelerate button—to go faster, you shake the two controllers alternately. You don't have to pump your arms the whole time, however—once you reach top speed, your vehicle will stay at that pace until you run into an obstacle or collide with an object. You flick both controllers simultaneously to jump, push the A Button to punch an opponent or a breakable object, and press the B Button to use an item. The most important move strategically, however, is the boost. Pick up bananas scattered around the track, then when you have enough, pull back on the Control Stick and release it to surge ahead. You can keep your boost going by crashing into barrels or other opponents. You'll have to string together huge boosts to sail to the front of the pack.

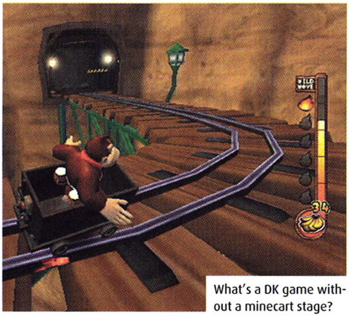
The courses are filled with all kinds of hidden little secrets—some beneficial and some dangerous. Blast barrels may shoot you toward a shortcut, but they might also lead you toward a route filled with kegs of TNT. It takes several trips through a course before you'll know which paths to take and which to avoid. In addition, there are plenty of natural obstacles to look out for. For example, on a mountain course steaming with hot lava, fiery boulders roll off the hill to try to crush you.

There are all kinds of cunning ways to mess with other riders as you zoom around the twisty tracks. Your punch attack will thwart the rider in front of you. And there's a whole host of items you can pick up to fire at your opponents; many of these items play on the the Wii-specific controls—you can send a pack of wasps at another player, slowing him down until the player literally shakes them off.

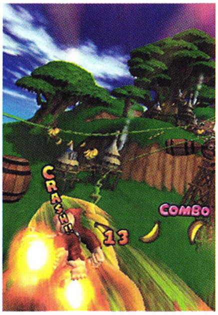
Our brief time with Barrel Blast has been more fun than a . . . eh, you know. We'll have more info later this year. —CHRIS S.

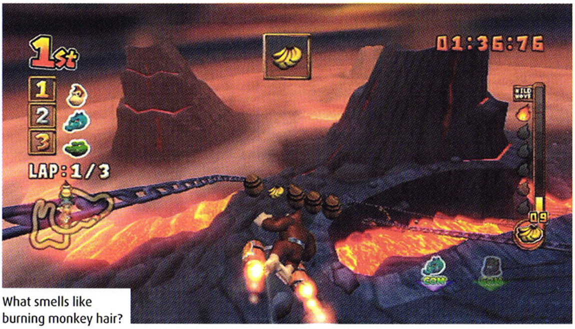
Here's a little-known fact: DK can hold his breath for a *long* time.



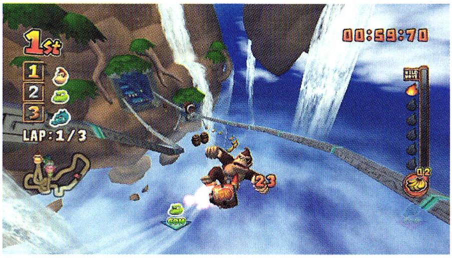


What's a DK game without a minecart stage?





What smells like burning monkey hair?



# New Flavors of Brain

## >BRAIN AGE 2: MORE TRAINING IN MINUTES A DAY!

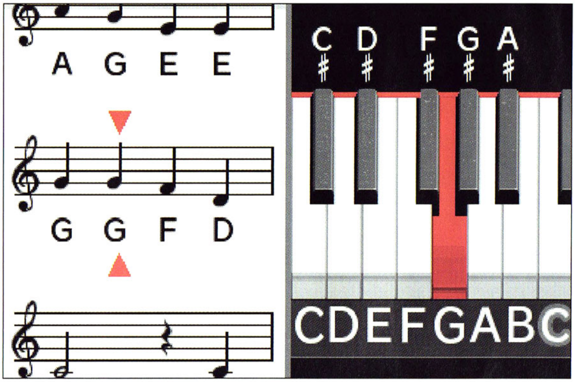
PLATFORM: **DS** • PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
DEVELOPER: **NINTENDO** • RELEASE: **AUGUST 2007**

**By now all of you hard-core** *Brain Age* fans out there probably think you've schooled the system. You've convinced yourself that your brain age will hover at or near that magical "20" for the foreseeable future. Brace yourselves, people—the disembodied head of Dr. Ryuta Kawashima is about to shatter your self image and force you to learn a new and (arguably) more challenging set of exercises. The good news is you'll have a lot of fun going back to square one.

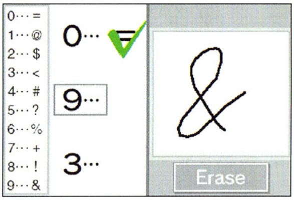
The front end of *Brain Age 2* is virtually identical to that of its predecessor—you can still check your brain age, do practice drills in the Training section, and play Sudoku—but virtually everything is different after you click through the first set of menus. The Stroop color-identification test from the original game has been replaced by a tricky Rock, Paper, Scissors game as the lead-off challenge during age checks. The more straightforward math challenges have also been tweaked to make you think a bit harder. For example, Math Recall obscures the numbers in equations to test your memory and your basic arithmetic skills. Change Maker adds object recognition to the mix by making you answer subtraction problems with currency.

Beyond the new approach to math, *Brain Age 2* offers a slew of fun new activities like Word Scramble, Piano Player, Word Blend, and Memory Sprint. Word Scramble presents you with a spinning jumble of letters that you need to reassemble into a real word. If you feel like tickling the ivories, Piano Player gives you the chance to tap the correct keys in time while sheet music scrolls up the screen. Word Blend tests your ability to concentrate by asking you to write out up to three words that are said at the same time (here's a tip: wear headphones). If you liked Head Count in the original *Brain Age*, Memory Sprint should make you happy and push you to your limits as you keep track of a runner's place in a frenetic foot race.

There are many more unlockable training exercises and lots of fun little activities—like connect-the-dots challenges and acrostics (puzzles that require you to generate related terms using the letters in a single word). *Brain Age 2*'s download mode play allows up to 16 people to play four different games using a single game card. As in the original *Brain Age*, your friends can also download a single-player demo. Everyone and their mother—literally—is going to be playing this game soon. You'd better start massaging your neurons now so you can keep up when the time comes. —DREW W.



Piano Player is fun—just don't expect any Ben Folds Five or Coldplay. They charge for songs.


0··· =
1··· @
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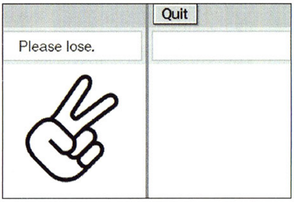
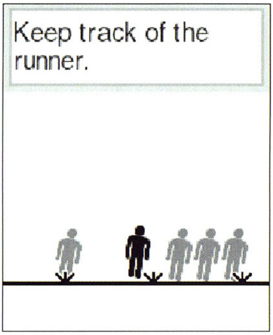
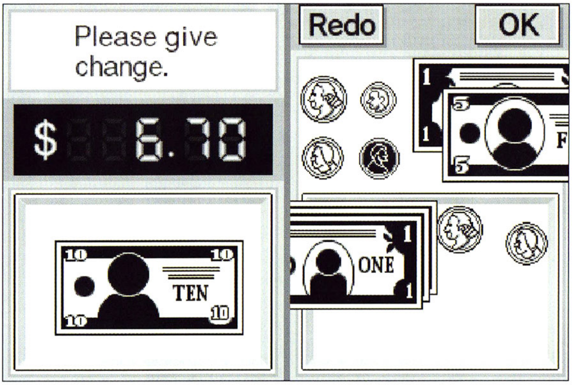
4··· #
5··· ?
6··· %
7··· +
8··· !
9··· &


Please lose.


Keep track of the runner.

You are not required to jump over the little shrubs on the race course.


Please give change.

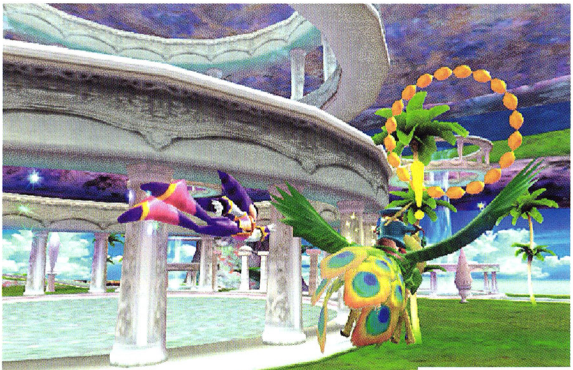
$ 6.70

# Dream Delight

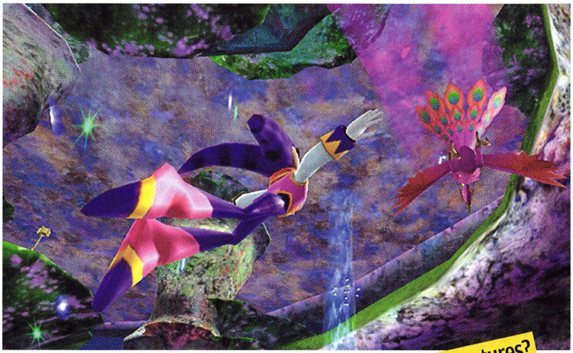
## >NiGHTS: JOURNEY OF DREAMS

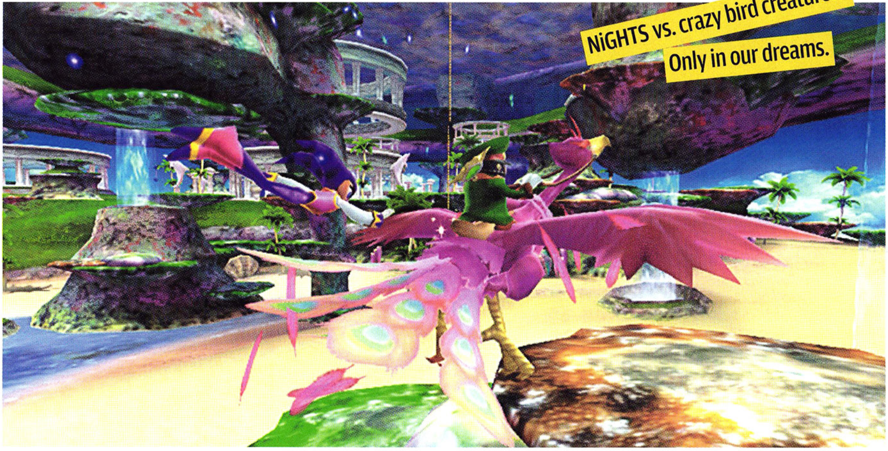
PLATFORM: Wii • PUBLISHER: SEGA
DEVELOPER: SEGA • RELEASE: FALL 2007

**Sega hasn't revealed** much additional information about its whimsical high-flying action game NiGHTS: Journey of Dreams since our cover feature in Volume 216, but we couldn't pass up an opportunity to showcase the latest screenshots of this gorgeous Wii exclusive. In case you slept through it, Journey of Dreams, the long-awaited sequel to the cult-classic Saturn game NiGHTS into Dreams, promises to follow in the original's footsteps by letting players take control of mysterious jester NiGHTS and soar, dive, and loop-the-loop through the enchanting dream-inspired realm of Nightopia. While the Saturn title had NiGHTS teaming up with human children named Elliot and Claris, Journey of Dreams instead features two new human protagonists by the names of Will and Helen. According to Sega, each character will take a different path through the game as they battle the evil Nightmarens that are threatening the land of dreams. In addition to acrobatic abilities (NiGHTS defeated enemies in the original game by looping around them or throwing them), NiGHTS will be able to use shape-shifting powers to advance through seven imaginative worlds. If the gameplay is as good as the visuals—and since many of the Saturn game's creators are contributing their talents, it should be—NiGHTS: Journey of Dreams may be one of the year's biggest successes. —CHRIS H.

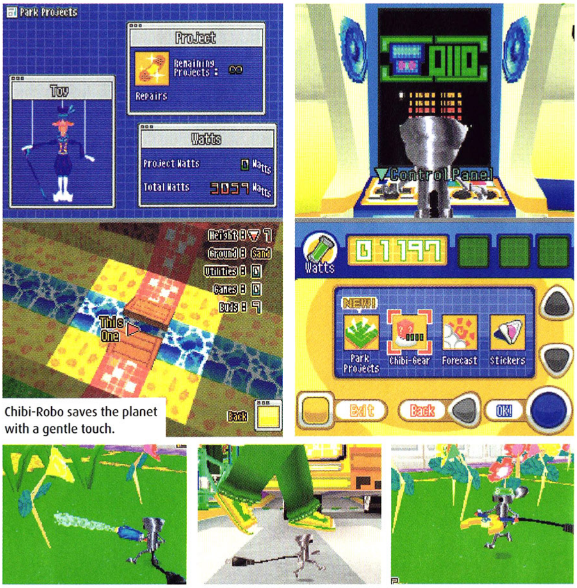


That ring can only mean one thing: more points!





NiGHTS vs. crazy bird creatures? Only in our dreams.


Park Projects
Project
Remaining Projects : ∞
Repairs
Toy
Watts
Project Watts 0 Watts
Total Watts 3059 Watts
Height 8 7
Ground 8 Sand
Utilities 8 0
Games 8 0
Buds 8 9
This One
Back
Control Panel
Watts
01197
NEW!
Park Projects
Chibi-Gear
Forecast
Stickers
Exit
Back
OK!

Chibi-Robo saves the planet with a gentle touch.

# Flower Power

## >CHIBI-ROBO: PARK PATROL

PLATFORM: DS • PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
DEVELOPER: SKIP • RELEASE: FALL 2007

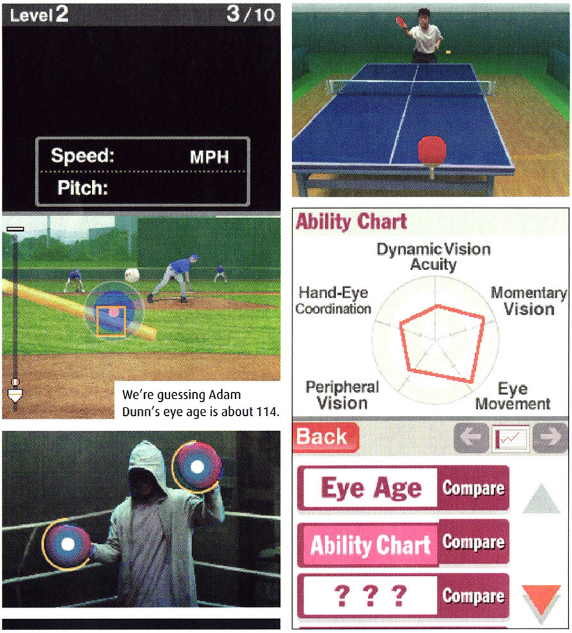
**Metallic do-gooder** Chibi-Robo helped a dysfunctional family get its groove back during his first mission, on GameCube. Shifting to DS, the next task on his to-do list is to clean up the environment beginning in a city park, where flowers have been dying mysteriously. Instead of performing domestic chores to earn Happy Points as in the first game, our four-inch robotic hero plants flowers and repairs park infrastructure; in turn the Happy Points can be converted into watts to recharge his battery or they can act as currency so Chibi can purchase helpful items. A cast of quirky but needy characters provides further opportunities for Chibi to bring happiness to the world. But in spite of Chibi's good will and deeds, the villainous Smogglor continues to pose Chibi with challenges, not the least of which is to battle hordes of Smoglings. Controlling Chibi's tools via the touch screen, you'll spin a disc to play the music box or pump up and down to water flowers, and managing your energy consumption requires lots of strategic planning. Sandbox game fans and Chibi vets have a lot to look forward to. —SCOTT P.

# Eye Opener

## >FLASH FOCUS: VISION TRAINING IN MINUTES A DAY

PLATFORM: DS • PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
DEVELOPER: NAMCO BANDAI • RELEASE: OCTOBER 2007

**Just to be clear up front**, the vision training offered by Flash Focus refers to your eyesight; it does not include exercises to hone one's supernatural awareness or ability to see into the future (unless those are unlockable via some cheat code we don't know about). Following in the medulla oblongata of Brain Age, Nintendo's latest nongame presents players with a number of simple challenges designed to work out various facets of eye power (peripheral vision, hand-eye coordination, etc.). The first time you play, you'll take a short series of tests to evaluate your "eye age." Then each time you complete an activity thereafter, the results are added to various charts and graphs so that you can follow your progress over time. A number of the challenges are sports-themed—hitting pitches in baseball, for instance, or throwing punches in the boxing ring—so Flash Focus does feel a bit more playful than Brain Age. The overall experiences are very similar, though. —STEVE T.


Level 2
3/10
Speed: MPH
Pitch:
Ability Chart
Dynamic Vision Acuity
Momentary Vision
Eye Movement
Peripheral Vision
Hand-Eye Coordination
Back
Eye Age
Compare
Ability Chart
Compare
? ? ?
Compare

We're guessing Adam Dunn's eye age is about 114.

# New Rave

## >RAYMAN RAVING RABBIDS 2

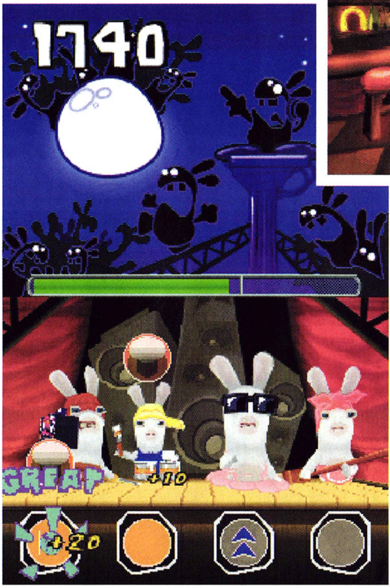
PLATFORM: DS • PUBLISHER: UBISOFT
DEVELOPER: UBISOFT • RELEASE: NOVEMBER 2007

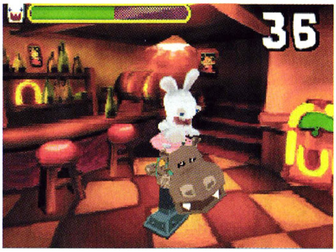
**While we were at Ubisoft's** development studio checking out Rayman Raving Rabbids 2 for Wii, we took a little time to check the progress on the DS game of the same name. The first Wii and DS Raving Rabbids games didn't really have much in common, but Raving Rabbids 2 for DS will share the same humorous, multiplayer slant as its new console cousin.

Raving Rabbids 2's minigames feature a lot of the same scenarios as the Wii version—both games feature a rodeo minigame, for example—but every minigame in the DS version is being designed with the system's unique characteristics in mind. You'll be able to play virtually all of the 35 to 40 minigames with three other players simultaneously, as well as play head-to-head with other people via single-card download play.

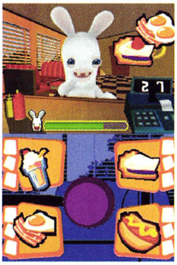
One really cool feature we got to try out was a Rabbid-character-design tool. You can paint directly onto their furry white bodies and dress them in wacky attire, then use your customized Rabbid in multiplayer events.

Look for Raving Rabbids 2 to go crazy on DS around Thanksgiving. —CHRIS S.





How long can *you* stay on the mechanical hippo?



The Rabbids sure know how to pack on the pounds.

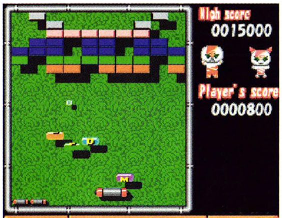
# Taito's Turn

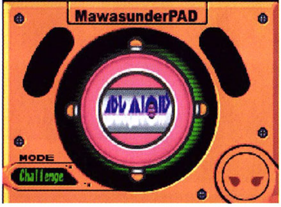
## >TURN IT AROUND

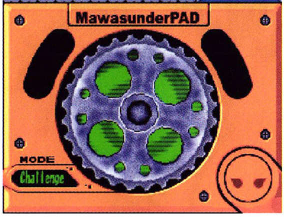
PLATFORM: DS • PUBLISHER: MAJESCO
DEVELOPER: TAITO • RELEASE: JULY 2007

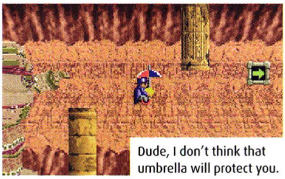
**Putting a twist on** Arkanoid, Cameltry, and other Taito classics, Majesco-published minigame mash-up Turn It Around gives your wrist a workout with stylus-triggered spin control. By making circles on the touch screen, you cause objects to turn and slide on the top screen. In Elevator Action, for example, you crank a pulley to deliver passengers to their floors. In Bub Bob (a take on Bubble Bobble), you aim a cannon to fire bubbles that capture enemies at the top of the screen. The game's 24 titles also include plenty of new games, many of which would be right at home in Nintendo's WarioWare collection. Takoyaki, Ice Dessert, and Sushi focus on food production and serving. Packed Train tests your balance on a bumpy train ride, and Umbrella Man challenges you to guide an umbrella-powered flyer through a cave while he attempts to escape from a giant robot. If your wrist gets weary, you can use the Control Pad and buttons to reach your goals. Multiplayer contests put two Turn Masters in head-to-head challenges, each player spying on the other's progress as the action unfolds. —GEORGE S.

Player
000
Meters
Opponent
000
Meters









Dude, I don't think that umbrella will protect you.

# Gotta Sketch 'Em All

## >DRAWN TO LIFE

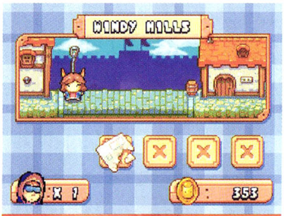
PLATFORM: DS • PUBLISHER: THQ
DEVELOPER: 5TH CELL • RELEASE: SEPTEMBER 2007

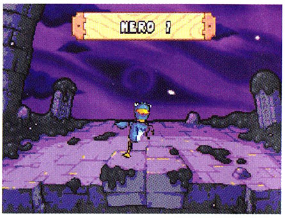
**In Drawn to Life you** are, quite literally, the lord of all creation. Characters, weapons, vehicles, and more—they're all yours to draw via the DS's touch screen as you attempt to ward off an encroaching darkness that threatens the village of the Raposa people. Evil, shadowy creatures have kidnapped most of the villagers and taken their sacred *Book of Life*, which is the source of the sun, the moon, the sky, and other essential elements.

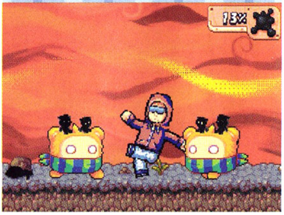
As the creator, you are the Raposas' salvation; you're able to breath life into a wooden mannequin and turn it into a hero of your own design—anything from a stick figure to a caricature of your favorite Mohawk-wearing '80s icon (or you can use a preprogrammed character design instead). As you control the hero through the game's four worlds (the Snow Fields, the Deep Dark Forest, the Rapo Islands, and the castle of Rapoville), you'll have plenty of additional opportunities to utilize your drawing skills, such as by creating your own level-specific equipment—including diving gear and wings—and other interactive objects (such as a whale that provides transportation and clouds that act as platforms). Numerous color palettes, grid lines, and a zoom function are all at your disposal to make your creations as detailed as you want, and you can modify your masterpieces whenever you wish.

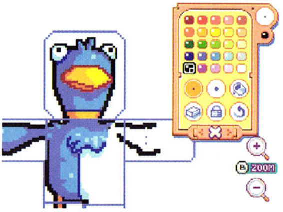
Although Drawn to Life may be best described as a platformer from a gameplay perspective, the action goes much deeper. You can defeat foes by jumping on them or by using one of several custom-created weapons (like a sword, a snow shooter, or an acorn blaster). Sometimes defeating the enemies isn't enough—you must eliminate the black sludge from which some of them emerge by rubbing the touch screen. Additionally, the levels are thoroughly nonlinear and promote exploration; each stage plays host to kidnapped villagers, pieces of pages torn from the *Book of Life*, and numerous other goodies (including extra color palettes and music tracks).

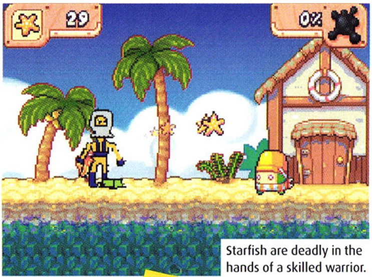
As you rescue the Raposas and restore the *Book of Life*, you'll revitalize the world and repopulate the village, which you can then explore from a top-down perspective. In addition to serving as a central hub for the four worlds (which span more than 16 levels), the village lets you converse with the townsfolk, play minigames, and exchange your custom characters with other players over a local wireless connection. THQ estimates that the action stages alone will take players more than 15 hours to complete, but with its vast customization options and DS-specific design, Drawn to Life could enthrall players as long as their imaginations permit. —CHRIS H.



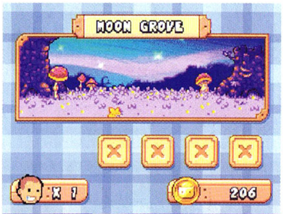


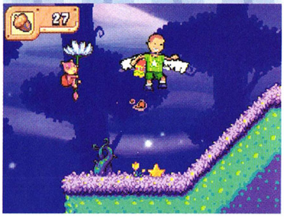


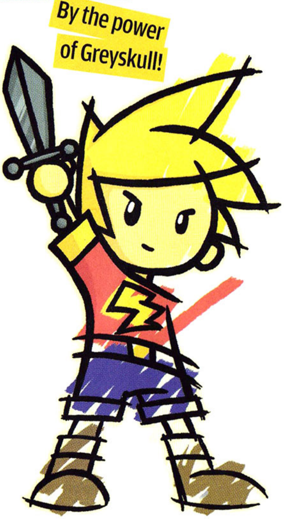




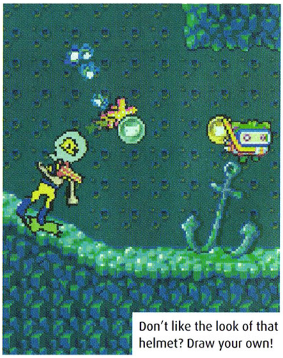
Starfish are deadly in the hands of a skilled warrior.







By the power of Greyskull!



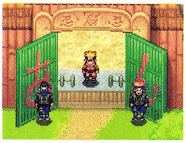
Don't like the look of that helmet? Draw your own!

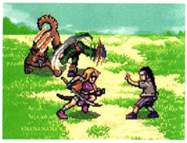
# Naruto RPG? Believe it!

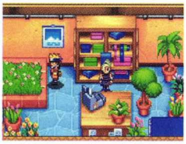
## >NARUTO: PATH OF THE NINJA

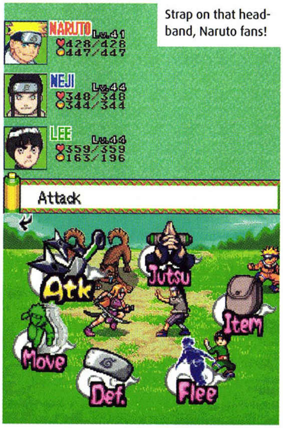
PLATFORM: DS • PUBLISHER: TOMY
DEVELOPER: TOSE • RELEASE: FALL 2007

**In Naruto games,** the storyline—which plays a huge part in manga and the cartoon—is often overshadowed by the ninja action. Not so in Path of the Ninja, a role-playing game that focuses heavily on the story of Naruto Uzumaki, starting with his graduation from the Ninja Academy. As an RPG, it's fairly standard—you'll explore the series' universe by means of an overworld map, engage in random battles, and visit towns such as the Village Hidden in the Leaves along the way. Your active party consists of only three heroes, but each slot can be swapped out from a larger group of six: Naruto, Sasuke, Sakura, Shikamaru, Neji, and Rock. And each playable character has a special attack that you can execute by engaging in a touch-controlled activity midbattle. Fans of the series (which, these days, means pretty much everyone) will be pleased to know that Path of the Ninja follows the storyline of the cartoon to a T, all the way through episode 80. —ANDY M.

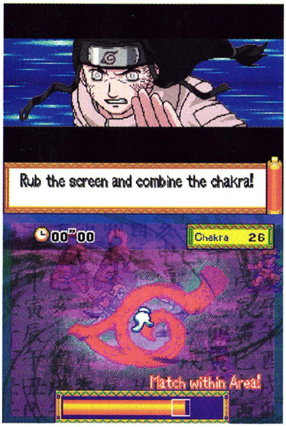







NARUTO Lv.41
428/428
447/447
NEJI Lv.44
348/348
344/344
LEE Lv.44
359/359
163/196
Attack
Atk
Jutsu
Item
Move
Def.
Flee

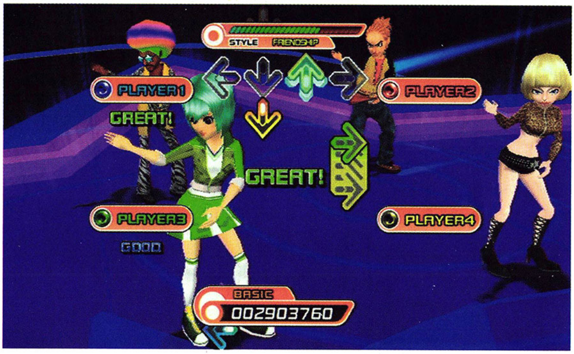
Strap on that headband, Naruto fans!

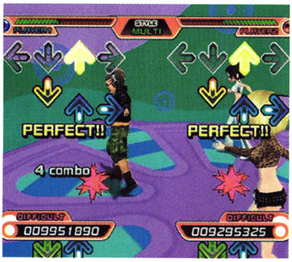


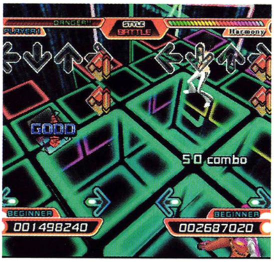
Rub the screen and combine the chakra!

00"00
Chakra 26

Match within Area!


STYLE
FRIENDSHIP
PLAYER1
PLAYER2
GREAT!
GREAT!
PLAYER3
PLAYER4
GOOD
BASIC
002903760


PLAYER1
STYLE
MULTI
PLAYER2
PERFECT!!
PERFECT!!
4 combo
DIFFICULT
009951890
DIFFICULT
009295325

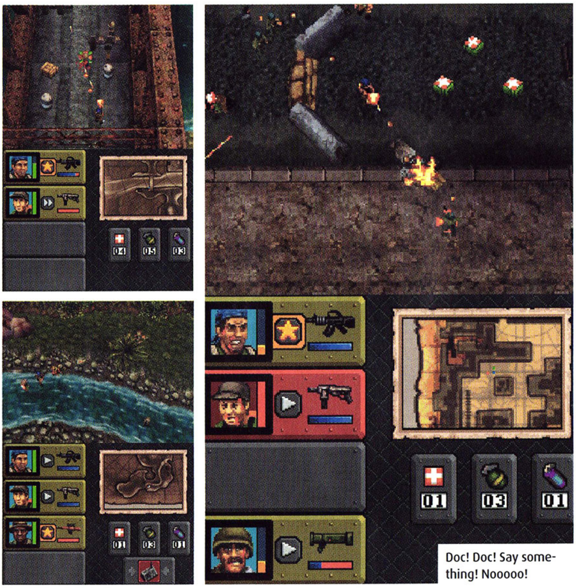

PLAYER1
DANGER!!
STYLE
BATTLE
Harmony
GOOD
50 combo
BEGINNER
001498240
BEGINNER
002687020

# Feel the Heat

## >DANCE DANCE REVOLUTION HOTTEST PARTY

PLATFORM: Wii • PUBLISHER: KONAMI
DEVELOPER: KONAMI • RELEASE: FALL 2007

**Whereas EA's Boogie** is going for a pick-up-and-play dancing experience on Wii, Hottest Party takes the opposite approach by being arguably the most involved dancing game to date. In addition to the already challenging up, down, left, right dance-pad action that the series is known for, the Wii-exclusive title throws motion control into the mix with flicks of the Wii remote and nunchuk. Hands-and-feet-on time with Hottest Party proved to be quite a mental and physical workout, but also a lot of fun. You'll follow onscreen arrows just like in any DDR game, along with new icons to represent your hand movements. Other icons, such as Missiles, Double Stomps, and Foot Destructors make the action even more intense—especially at higher difficulty levels. The dance pad, which comes bundled with the game, connects conveniently into a GameCube controller port on the Wii. (If you've got a DDR Mario Mix dance pad, it will work just fine.) For fans of the series, Hottest Party may be a much-needed next step for the franchise. The song list is large and varied; the modes, some of which support four-player action, are many; and motion control adds a challenging new element to the classic formula. You can try it for yourself this fall. —ANDY M.



Doc! Doc! Say something! Nooooo!

# 'Nam Good

## >OPERATION: VIETNAM

PLATFORM: DS • PUBLISHER: MAJESCO
DEVELOPER: COYOTE CONSOLE • RELEASE: SEPTEMBER 2007

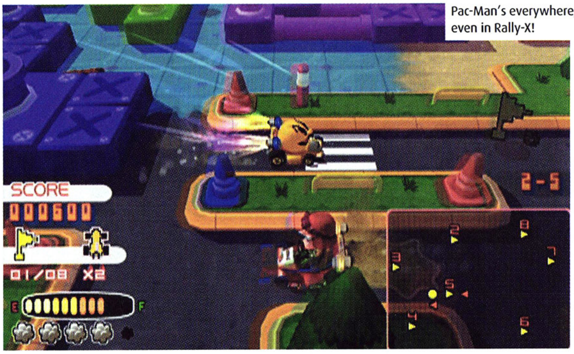
**A relatively untapped** conflict in the video game realm, the war in Southeast Asia gets its due in Majesco's Operation: Vietnam. Sporting a vibrant art style reminiscent of the Metal Slug series (only with an overhead view instead of the traditional side view), the game puts you in charge of a four-soldier squad: natural leader Sarge, medic Doc, sniper Scopes, and all-around fighter Hopper. As you command the troops through 20 arcade-style jungle-combat stages, you switch control between team members to take advantage of each soldier's specialty. If you use Doc to apply health packs, for example, they'll replenish more energy than they would at the hands of a different team member. You also dole out orders to squadmates, tanks, turrets, and other reinforcements by tapping icons on the touch screen. Aiming accuracy can be an issue in overhead-view games, but not so here. As soon as you get a bead on an enemy, your soldier will lock on, allowing you to take evasive action as you fire. Vietnam doesn't have the stories of glory that gaming favorite WWII has, but this operation would work with any war as its backdrop. —GEORGE S.

# Night at the Museum

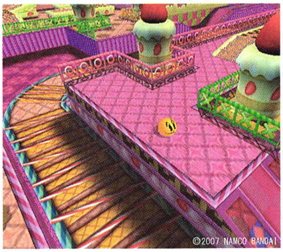
## >NAMCO MUSEUM REMIX

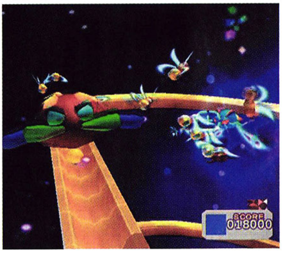
PLATFORM: Wii • PUBLISHER: NAMCO BANDAI
DEVELOPER: NAMCO BANDAI • RELEASE: FALL 2007

**The Namco Museum** classics compilations have been on pretty much every system known to man, so what makes the Remix version on Wii so special? Plenty—namely five modernized versions of classic games, rebuilt from the ground up with new play mechanics that take advantage of Wii control. In the new version of Galaga, for example, you must point and shoot with the remote to destroy enemy aliens in order to protect Pac-Man, who's rolling along a roller-coaster-like track in deep space. On the other hand, Rally-X is more of a 3-D remake of the original game, in which you try to collect flags while avoiding hazards and other racers; Rally-X also features a four-player split-screen mode. Also included are Pac'n Roll, a tilt-control-enabled version of the 2005 DS title; Gator Panic, a gator-smashing game similar to Whack-a-Mole; and Pac-Motos, in which you must knock opponents off of colorful platforms. If you really want to go old school, you can play the original arcade versions of nine Namco classics: Galaxian, Dig Dug, Mappy, Xevious, Gaplus, Super Pac-Man, Pac & Pal, Pac-Mania, and Cutie Q. —CHRIS H.



Pac-Man's everywhere, even in Rally-X!


©2007 NAMCO BANDAI



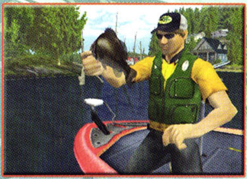
# WE TAKE OUR VIRTUAL FISHING SERIOUSLY.

# DO YOU?

## THE FIRST ONLINE MULTIPLAYER FISHING GAME FOR THE Wii™

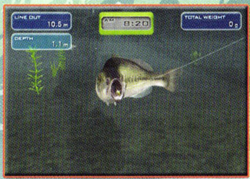
# HOOKED!

## REAL MOTION FISHING



LINE OUT 7.7 m
DEPTH 1.4 m
AM 10:55
TOTAL WEIGHT 0 g

25.8 m
AM 10:05
TOTAL WEIGHT 0 g


LINE OUT 10.5 m
DEPTH 1.1 m
AM 8:20
TOTAL WEIGHT 0 g

*The only fishing game on the Wii with online multiplayer!*
**Challenge the best virtual fishermen around the world via online Nintendo Wi-Fi play.**

*A wide range of fishing environments!*
**Explore 6 photorealistic lakes, from a meteorite crater turned lake to a man-made recreational reservoir.**

*Immerse yourself in the fight with realistic fishing controls!*
**Push, pull and swing the Wii Remote™ and reel with the Nunchuk™ to catch the big one.**

RATING PENDING
RP
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Visit www.esrb.org for updated rating information.

Wii™ nintendo Wi-Fi connection sims ARC SYSTEM WORKS arcsystemworks.jp AKSYS GAMES

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# Beautiful

## Gaming's first lady returns for possibly her greatest adventure yet in **Metroid Prime 3: Corruption.**

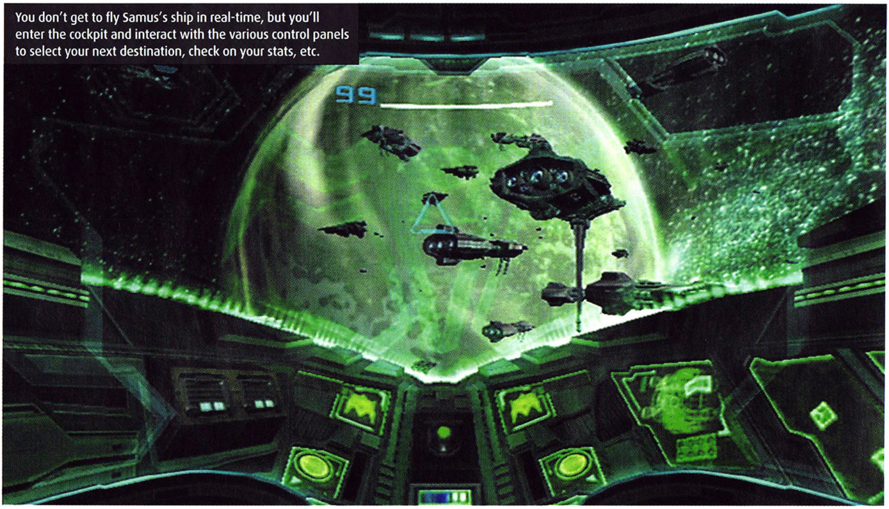
By Steve Thomason

# Corruption

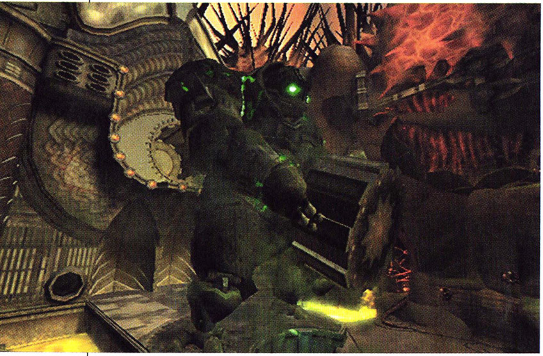
**It may sound a bit strange** given Wii's stellar success in the marketplace, but Metroid Prime 3: Corruption is the game that finally proves Nintendo's new console. While Twilight Princess and Super Paper Mario were great, both began life as GameCube titles, and thus didn't fully showcase what Wii brings to the table. Corruption is the first full-fledged game published by Nintendo that's been built from the ground up for the system. And judging by the first few hours of Samus's latest adventure, Wii owners are in for something special.

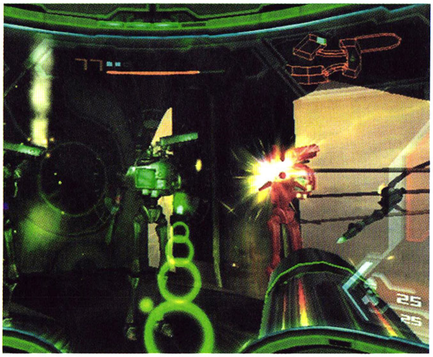
It all starts with the silky-smooth controls. On the Advanced scheme, the farther you move the targeting reticle from the center of the screen (via pointing with the remote), the faster you'll turn the camera. That allows you to either slowly survey your surroundings or quickly spin around to face an oncoming foe. Two other control options add a bounding box (a dead zone within which you can manipulate the targeting reticle without moving the camera) and are intended for beginners. The Advanced scheme, though, offers a level of precision and sensitivity comparable to a mouse-and-keyboard setup. This is the example from which other Wii developers will learn, and it should herald a bright future for first-person shooters on the console.

To coincide with this new control setup, locking onto an enemy no longer doubles as an auto-aim function. It merely centers the camera on your foe; you're responsible for actually lining up the shot via the Wii remote. Corruption's combat feels a bit more intense than its predecessors' as a result, and certain enemies are cleverly designed to put



You don't get to fly Samus's ship in real-time, but you'll enter the cockpit and interact with the various control panels to select your next destination, check on your stats, etc.





your sharp-shooting skills to the test.

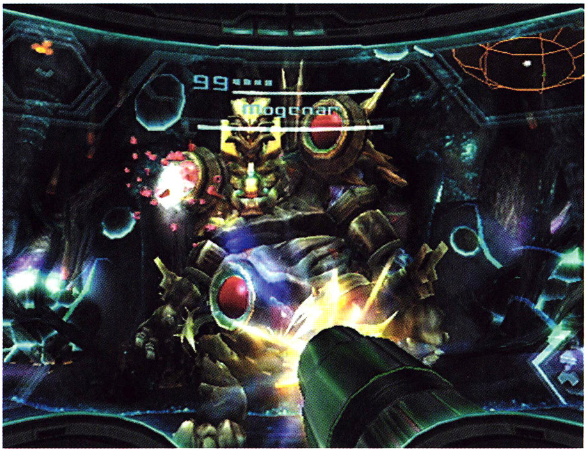
The other big control hook (no pun intended) is Samus's new grappling lasso, which you deploy with a flick of the nunchuk and reel in by pulling back. The mechanic feels much more responsive than it did in previous demos, and using it to yank a hunk of debris from your path or wrench a shield from an enemy's grasp is immensely satisfying. Certain activities also involve manipulating the Wii remote—priming a pumping station, for instance, or inserting an energy cell and locking it into place. Even if they don't add a whole lot from a gameplay standpoint, such tasks help draw you into the game's world and create an even more immersive experience than Metroids past.

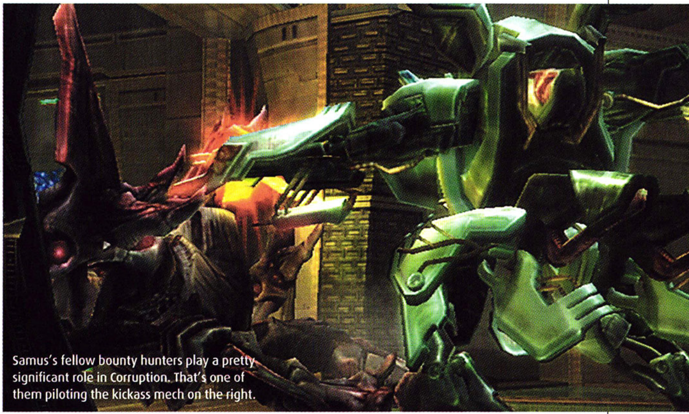
## Star Tours

Corruption begins with Samus being summoned to an enormous Galactic Federation capital ship. Upon landing, you'll learn the basics as you make your way to the command deck, only to have your meeting with the captain and the ship's supercomputer interrupted by a surprise attack. You must then lead our heroine back to her own ship, navigating rubble-filled corridors and blasting the marauding space pirates while the battle unfolds all around you. It's a very cinematic opening (if a bit reminiscent of a certain other sci-fi shooter) that does a fantastic job of getting you pumped up for the adventure ahead. Also worth noting is that all of the dialogue is fully voiced (and pretty well, too); Ms. Aran is conspicuous by her silence, however.

As the conflict spills over to the planet below, Samus is tasked with activating the orbital defense system on a Federation military base. The action quotient remains high, and the mission culminates in a jaw-dropping battle with the latest incarnation of an old nemesis: Meta Ridley. The boss knocks both Samus and itself down a large shaft, and the two duke it out while free-falling (think Gandalf and the Balrog in *The Lord of the Rings*). A countdown at the lower edge of the screen shows how close you're getting to the bottom, and you've got to finish off the gargantuan beast before Samus goes splat.

By the time you reach the second planet, Bryyo, Corruption starts to ease off the combat emphasis and shift toward the series' traditional focus on exploration. And are these worlds ever a joy to explore. The gorgeous visuals represent not only an upgrade over previous games in the series, but a significant leap beyond anything else we've seen on





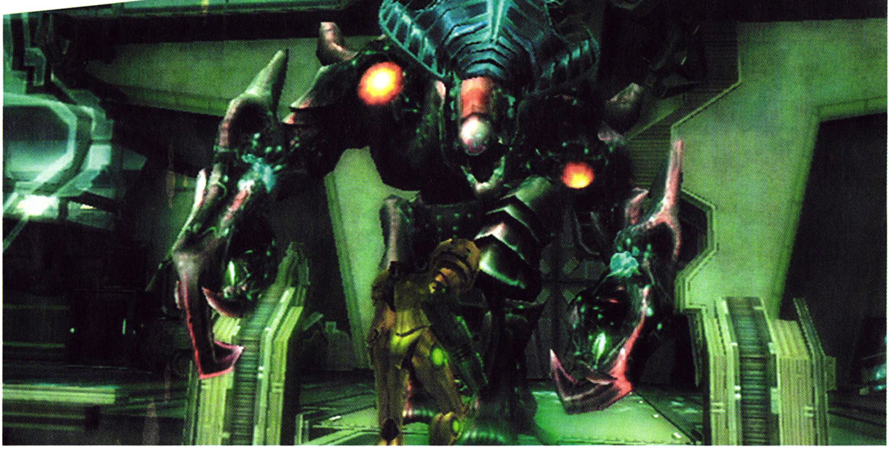
Samus's fellow bounty hunters play a pretty significant role in Corruption. That's one of them piloting the kickass mech on the right.

Wii. Beautiful lighting, complex architecture, and stunning texture work are a testament to Retro's talents for making hardware sing (especially considering that the game never dips below 60 frames per second). But as always, Prime's inspired art direction stands out as much as any technical achievement. Each world has its own identity and its own history, brought to life with meticulous detail. Bryyo's crumbling ruins and hulking mechanical golems that lie in disrepair hint at the planet's war-torn past. Your subsequent destination, Elysia's eerily beautiful floating city, is populated only by steampunk-style robots that continue to go about their programmed duties even though the planet has seemingly been abandoned for centuries. Not a single landscape we've ventured into thus far feels the slightest bit incomplete or artificial.

## Third Prime's a Charm

Corruption's desire to convince you of your surroundings pervades every facet of its design. The problem with a lot of great adventure titles is that the puzzles, however engaging they may be from a gameplay standpoint, often feel like they don't belong in the environment. They seem too video game-y. In Prime 3, everything is very organic; all of the elements that make up a puzzle feel like part of the game's world. Whether you're trying to bypass space-pirate defenses or activate some antiquated piece of alien machinery, the presentation is such that you're never drawn out of the illusion. Best of all, none of this comes at the expense of complexity or ingenuity. As a matter of fact, these might be the most mind-bending puzzles in the series, and many of them force you to think outside the Metroid box. Corruption doesn't throw away the rule book, but it certainly adds some new chapters.

Another major improvement over the previous game is that the re-traversal aspects are now more tightly integrated into the adventure. In Echoes, being forced to hoof back to an area that you'd already explored often felt arbitrary; like it was something you had to do just because it was a Metroid game. Corruption does a far better job of giving those return trips a purpose, and often introduces some new element to keep things fresh. Your first journey to a large temple on Bryyo, for instance, is relatively quiet, and allows you to focus on simply reaching your destination. When you return later to deactivate an underground shield generator, however, you'll find that space pirates have discovered the temple and set up a mobile command post, making your second trek more



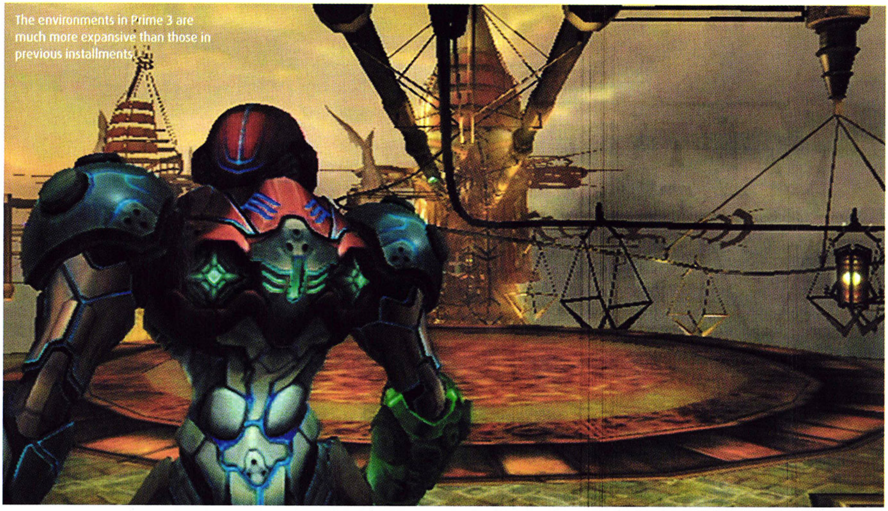
combat-intensive. What we've played thus far also seems slightly more linear than previous installments, though not to the extent that it ceases to feel like Metroid. (Just expect to get lost a little less often.)

Bringing everything together is Corruption's fantastic pacing. The game is never content to settle into a groove, whether it's introducing some cool little action sequence to get your blood pumping (like the ziplines on Elysia that quickly whisk you from one area to the next while you blast any errant maintenance drones that get in your path), or even changing the overall tone for a while. Imagine finding yourself in a place where the mood evokes something like Ridley Scott's classic *Alien* flick. The blast doors have been sealed shut, various consoles are malfunctioning, and members of the crew—seemingly frozen in time—disintegrate into ashes upon contact. As you explore and try to figure out what happened, the suspense builds and builds until . . . well, we don't want to ruin it for you. Suffice it to say that Corruption is always finding new ways to keep you engaged. The last game to so skillfully blend its various elements was Resident Evil 4, and that's not a comparison I make lightly.

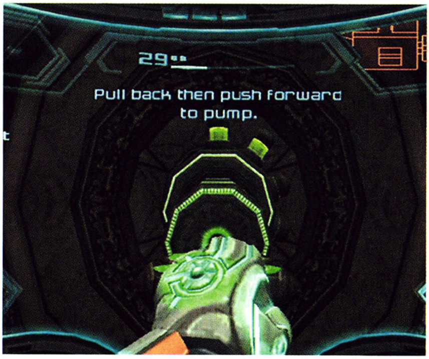
Of course, one of the Prime franchise's greatest strengths has always been its imaginative boss battles, and the third installment is no different. Though most are not as frenetic as your early encounter with Meta Ridley, subsequent bosses are no less impressive. In the first six hours of the game (which is only 19% according to the in-game progress tracker), we've already faced off against five big baddies, and all of them have been extremely well designed. They offer just the right amount of challenge, and in true series fashion, force you to perfect using your various abilities in tandem. Taking down one of these goliaths always brings a great sense of accomplishment.

## Absolute Power

The Corruption in the game's title plays a major role both in narrative and gameplay terms. During your brief meeting with the captain at the beginning of the game, you're informed that the supercomputers comprising the Federation's network have been infected with a mysterious virus. But what quickly becomes of even greater concern is that meteorites containing large amounts of Phazon (the powerful-yet-deadly material that corrupts the locations of the first two games) simultaneously crash into a number of planets and gradually begin to corrupt each world. Presumably because any intergalactic governing body must be



The environments in Prime 3 are much more expansive than those in previous installments.



Pull back then push forward to pump.

bogged down by a bureaucracy of epic proportions, the Federation is forced to turn to a small group of bounty hunters, including Samus, to resolve both problems. It all sounds simple enough until an old acquaintance, the presumed-dead Dark Samus, shows up to infect our heroine with Phazon.

Many of Samus's new abilities in the game stem from that corruption. For instance, she can now sacrifice an energy tank to temporarily enter Hypermode, allowing her to fire concentrated (and superpowerful) blasts of Phazon. Over the course of the adventure, you'll discover additional corruption-fueled enhancements, such as the Hyperball, which allows you to discharge bolts of Phazon while in Morph Ball mode. The downside is that misusing these powers can spell an early demise for the bounty hunter; you've got to keep an eye on your corruption meter, and if it reaches critical mass, quickly discharge as much Phazon as you can.

Naturally, Samus will also acquire various weapon upgrades, though unlike previous Prime titles, there's no need to switch between them. Instead, your beams and missiles "stack" like they did in Super Metroid; once you've obtained the Ice Missile, for instance, that characteristic is *added* to any other missile upgrades already in your arsenal. You've also got a new ship visor that allows you to control Samus's space craft remotely. Initially, the only order you can issue is for the vessel to land at certain locations, giving you the opportunity to save your progress and replenish your ammo. But like its owner, the ship can be upgraded with new functions. Acquiring the first of these involves one of the coolest bits in the first few hours of the game. You'll come across a landing pad equipped with a full payload of air-to-surface missiles, but in order for your ship to land there, you've got to figure out a way to open the hangar-bay doors. It takes quite a bit of effort, but the reward is well worth it.

Needless to say, we're pretty excited about this one. It's been a long, sometimes-painful wait, but the extra development time (Corruption was originally slated as a Wii launch title) has afforded Retro the opportunity to polish everything to an absolute sheen. You'll finally be able to enjoy the fruits of that labor come August 27.

# THE MAIN EVENT

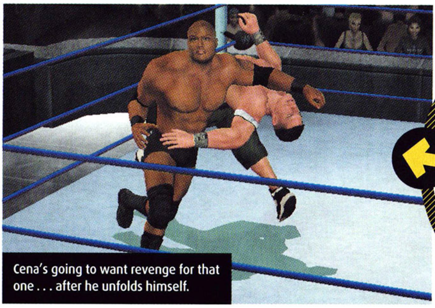
Step into the ring for hands-on details of the two most innovative wrestling games to date—**WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2008** on Wii and DS. By Chris Hoffman

RAW
LIVE FAST FIGHT HARD
CHAIN GANG ASSAULT BATTALION
JOHN CENA
CHAMPION

Are you ready? I said, "ARE YOU READY!?" Well, if you're expecting the same-old, same-old traditional wrestling experience out of the Wii and DS versions of WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2008, then you definitely ain't ready yet. With intuitive, system-specific control schemes, THQ's upcoming grapplers will take you places you've never been in the squared circle.

## WWE Meets Wii

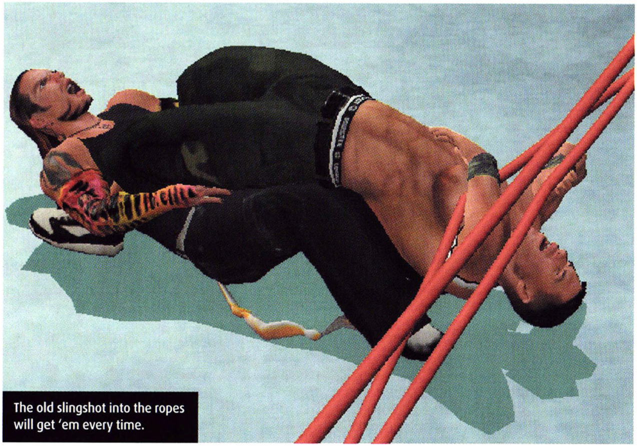
**Even though the WWE SmackDown vs. Raw series** has been around for years, the 2008 edition marks the first time the title has come to Nintendo platforms—and the series is arriving with a bang. Nearly every aspect of the Wii version's gameplay involves the system's unique motion-sensitive controls, and unlike SmackDown vs. Raw games that have appeared on other consoles, the Wii edition emphasizes a pick-up-and-play ease of use that's designed to make players feel like they're right in the middle of the ring.



Cena's going to want revenge for that one . . . after he unfolds himself.

"We felt it was crucial that the motions of the Wii remote match the action that occurs onscreen during gameplay." —Dan Ryan, associate game designer

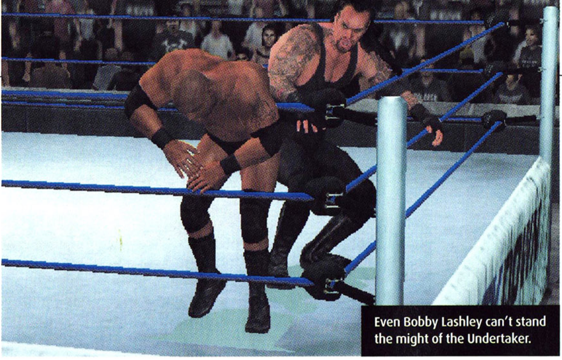
"With the Wii version of WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2008, we're trying to offer a unique experience compared to other incarnations of the game," explains associate game designer Dan Ryan. "Our main focus is making the controls the best that they could be by utilizing the Wii remote to give players the sensation that they are actually performing the hard-hitting maneuvers along with the WWE superstars onscreen."



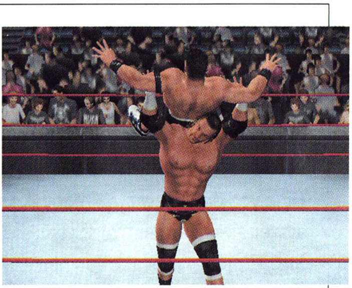
The old slingshot into the ropes will get 'em every time.

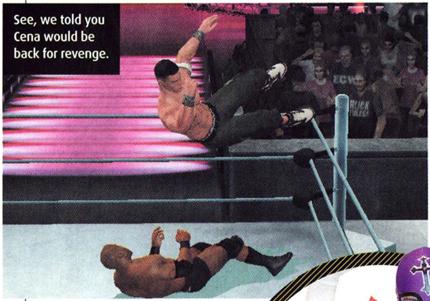
While character movement is handled via the Control Stick on the Wii's nunchuk, all of the offensive maneuvers are mapped to motions of the remote. A basic flick of the remote in any direction unleashes a direction-appropriate striking attack—an upward motion may yield a dropkick or a big boot, while a downward motion may trigger a kick to the gut, and a swing to the right may unleash a Ric Flair-like chop. Moving the remote quickly back and forth will yield a striking combo. (Note that all control motions mentioned are tentative and may differ in the final game.)

Quick grapple attacks are handled in much the same way—hold down the A Button and move the remote in a direction to activate basic grapple moves, such as an arm drag (by holding A and flicking left), a knee lift (by holding A and flicking up), or a European uppercut (by holding A and flicking right). If you hold B and move the remote, you'll initiate an Ultimate Control Grapple, which lets you lock up with an opponent then execute a number of hard-hitting moves that mimic the real-life

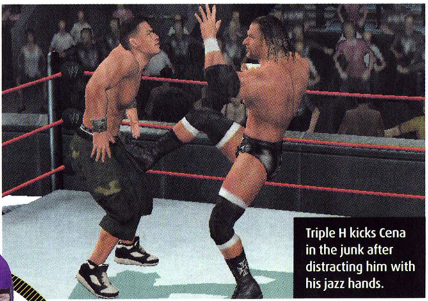


Even Bobby Lashley can't stand the might of the Undertaker.

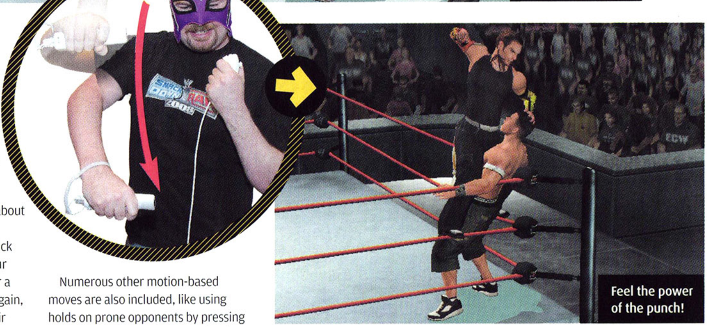




See, we told you Cena would be back for revenge.



Triple H kicks Cena in the junk after distracting him with his jazz hands.



Feel the power of the punch!

movements of your favorite wrestlers.

"We felt it was crucial that the motions of the Wii remote match the action that occurs onscreen during gameplay," Ryan states. "In doing this, the controls as a whole became a lot more intuitive in that players can perform the types of maneuvers they want to without having to think too much about it or rely on memorization."

For example, if you hold B and flick the remote up, you might hook your opponent's head in preparation for a suplex. If you flick the remote up again, you'll lift your adversary into the air (after which you can walk around holding him to add insult to injury), then you can flick it down or up to suplex him to the canvas, or flick it left or right to drop him face-first onto the mat. Alternatively, if you hold B and flick the remote right, you can pick up your opponent and hold him sideways; complete the move by flicking up then down for a backbreaker, left then right for a side slam, or down then up for a fallaway slam.

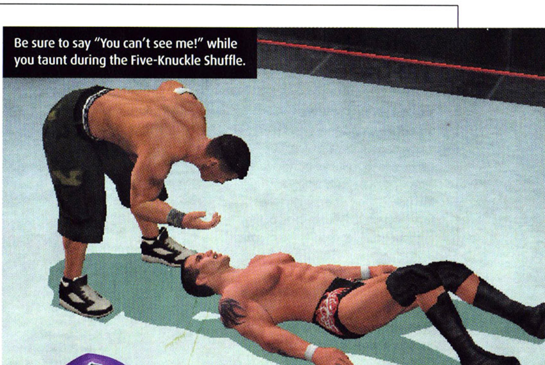
> **"The taunts in the game are an absolute blast to perform . . ."**
>
> **—Dan Ryan, associate game designer**

Numerous other motion-based moves are also included, like using holds on prone opponents by pressing A and flicking the remote, moving the remote in any direction to dive off the turnbuckle, Irish-whipping your opponent against the ropes by shaking the nunchuk, and trapping your opponent in the corner and punching him by clenching the remote in your fist and swinging away. Expect weapons as well: "We're toying with the idea of having the player wave both the Wii remote and nunchuk simultaneously to simulate lifting a steel chair overhead and bashing it down on an opponent's skull," reveals Ryan.

A wrestling game wouldn't be complete without taunts and signature moves, and SVR 2008 has those bases covered. You taunt your opponent by holding the C Button and making the same motion as the real-life wrestler you're controlling—simply wave the remote in front of your face to use John Cena's "You can't see me!" taunt, for example.

"The taunts in the game are an absolute blast to perform, because for the first time ever, the player is actually doing the taunt via the same real-life movement," Ryan remarks. "Players can now wave the Wii remote and nunchuk to throw the infamous DX 'Suck it!' taunt at not only their opponents onscreen but also their friends standing next to them."

In the game's current state, players can use their wrestler's favorite signature move (the Five-Knuckle Shuffle fist drop in Cena's case) by holding A and B and shaking the remote once they've drained about half of their opponent's health, and execute their finishing move (like Triple H's Pedigree) by doing the same motion once the foe's health is almost totally depleted. In both cases, holding the buttons and shaking the remote merely initiates the move—



Be sure to say "You can't see me!" while you taunt during the Five-Knuckle Shuffle.

it's up to you to complete it by, for example, moving the remote up then down to lay out an opponent with Cena's FU.

The Wii version's unique controls, however, tell only half the story. To go along with the accessible control scheme, the developers are working to make the gameplay faster and more arcadelike so anybody, wrestling fan or not, can jump in and start having fun. This means no stamina meters to drag the action down, no momentum meters to build up before executing special moves, and no character-specific fighting styles (as had been previously announced for the game). The designers have also removed any unnecessary control complications—for example, instead of hitting a button to climb a turnbuckle or exit the ring, you merely move the character in the appropriate direction. There's no run button either; you'll use a running move automatically if you attack when you're far from your opponent.

"As we tried to develop a more arcade-style game, a lot of actions that we felt didn't apply to this new approach were removed," comments Ryan. "I think the game is a lot more accessible than earlier games in the series and would compare its gameplay more [to] WWF No Mercy or WWF WrestleMania 2000 for Nintendo 64. I think there are a good number of gamers who are getting annoyed with the use of every single button on a controller, which has been the trend in a lot of titles these days."

In spite of the simplified gameplay, the Wii game will offer a robust feature set. Both a single-player experience and multiplayer modes for up to four players will be included, and the game will have a create-a-wrestler feature comparable to those in previous versions of SmackDown vs. Raw. Numerous match types (including hard-core matches, Triple Threat matches, and Fatal Four-Ways) are also planned, as are a roster of superstars spanning the Raw, SmackDown, and ECW brands (Triple H, the Undertaker, Jeff Hardy, Bobby Lashley, Kane, John Cena, Rey Mysterio, Randy Orton, Sandman, and Chris Masters have been revealed so far) and authentic voice-over commentary from all six WWE announcers.

THQ hopes that the end result is a game that captures the attention of wrestling fans and nonfans alike. "I think WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2008 for the Wii truly offers a completely brand-new experience," says Ryan. "I think the game will appeal to absolutely everyone, whether they are new to the series or not."

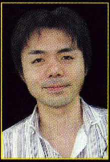
## SMACK TALK

Japanese developer Yuke's has been working on the SmackDown series since its inception in 2000. Just prior to this year's WrestleMania, we had the chance to sit down with the Yuke's tag team of director Yoshio Togiya and lead programmer Takashi Takezawa to get their thoughts on bringing the franchise to Wii.

*Nintendo Power: What does working on Wii mean to you as a game designer?*

**Yoshio Togiya:** I think the most important feature, but also at the same time the most challenging for us, is that . . . up until now, our wrestling-game fans have been pretty hard-core wrestling and fighting gamers. And the challenge with bringing our title to the Wii is to make it fun, to make it light, and to make it easy to use, so that it matches with the Wii user and with the platform. That's going to be the key in our development. It has been and it will be going forward.

*NP: How did you come up with new ideas for the Wii version?*



**Takashi Takezawa:** Two major ways; one of them is just picking up the controller and trying things out ourselves. For a lot of the gimmicks and a lot of the moves that the wrestlers actually perform, we picked it up and tried it out, and just kept trying it and playing it to see what felt like it fit the best with the controller. The second way is we, on the programming side, actually did a lot of research on the hardware, and researched what was the correct direction to get the best feedback in terms of moving the controller and how to assign different things to different areas of the controller. We put a lot of effort into really fully researching the hardware.

*NP: What would you say the best thing is about working on Wii?*

**YT:** It's that feeling that we get when you're able to perform a move with the controller and the response is so spot-on that you see it happen right away onscreen, and you get that feeling that you're actually performing the move. And that feels just wonderful for us. I think that that's the best part so far.

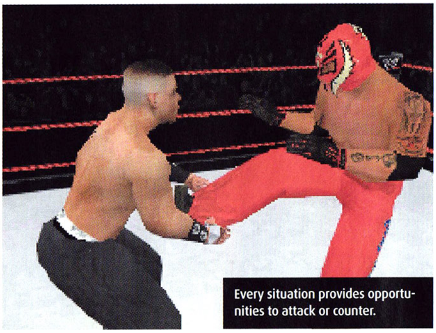
**TT:** When we're able to actually be successful with that, and [when] we are successful in figuring out how to translate one of the moves to a Wii-specific or a Wii-unique style, and it feels good, that's the biggest success and the biggest satisfaction.

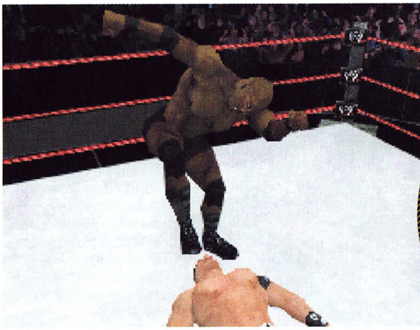
*NP: What do you like about professional wrestling, and how are you translating that into game form?*

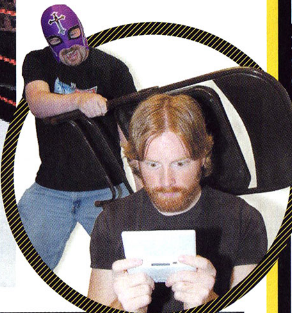
**TT:** The gimmicks and the special moves that all of the different wrestlers perform are very unique, and having those things is what makes pro wrestling very unique in itself. Being able to put that into our game and making it easy for the users to perform those special moves, as well as the reactions that wrestlers would have based on their personalities, is pretty much the thing we're focusing on. And then going a step beyond that is giving the users an immense amount of control over that, to not only allow them to do these things, but to actually allow them to feel like they're experiencing these things.

**YT:** WWE pro wrestling is entertainment at its best, so bringing that entertainment into our game is also very important for us. Of course, the in-game fighting is a really important part of our game, but at the same time, the entrances and the number of different cut-scenes that we have in season mode—we're utilizing all of those different areas as much as possible to really bring that feeling of entertainment to our users, to give them that feeling that maybe they're watching this on TV or experiencing it in real life.

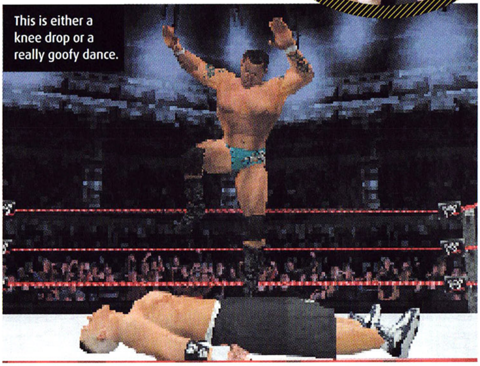
# Two Letters for Ya: DS


Every situation provides opportunities to attack or counter.





**The Wii version of WWE SmackDown vs. Raw** offers plenty of innovations in its own right, but the DS version (developed by Amaze) is a wrestling game truly unlike any other. Not only is the game completely touch-controlled, but instead of moving your grappler around the ring and unleashing moves like in a typical wrestling game, the bouts unfold through a series of situations that transition from one to the next depending on how you interact with the touch screen; it's sort of like wrestling meets Dragon's Lair, with a ton of touch-driven interaction thrown in. For any of the game's 95 situations—locking up with your opponent, holding him in a submission maneuver, preparing him for a slam, etc.—you'll have up to three touch-screen options that allow you to use various attacks and actions to proceed through the match.

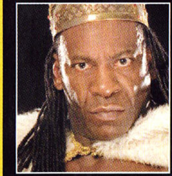

This is either a knee drop or a really goofy dance.

"We wanted to utilize the features that make the DS such a unique platform," says creative manager Tony Sharma. "The common route would've been to simply try to port over the console version of WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2008. We felt, however, that the DS deserved its own version, as the hardware gives us a tremendous opportunity to do something different and really make players feel like they are performing the various strikes and slams."

When you initiate a situation, icons appear on the touch screen, each corresponding to a different move with varying levels of attack power. After touching an icon, you must perform a move-appropriate action on the touch screen. For example, you might touch your character's hand to set up a quick but weak punch, then draw a line from your hand to the opponent's face to clock him. Alternatively, you can select the "medium-strength" icon to initiate an Irish whip, or the "powerful" icon to set up for a suplex. The stronger the move, the more complex the motion, which may involve rapidly tapping the screen, drawing a series of arrows, rubbing the screen repeatedly in a given direction, or making a circular motion to

## RING LEADERS

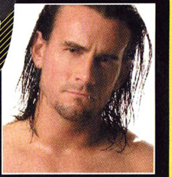
**THQ hasn't revealed WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2008's full character roster yet, but here are a few WWE superstars we'd like to see (and the odds they'll make it into the game).**



### King Booker

Since being crowned King of the Ring in 2006, this regal superstar has only got better and better.

*Odds of appearing: 2:1*



### CM Punk

The "Straightedge Superstar" has a Cobra (from G.I. Joe) tattoo on his right arm. What more do you need?

*Odds of appearing: 1:1*

### Super Crazy

This high-flying luchador is so impressive, he should change his name to Super Awesome Crazy.

*Odds of appearing: 1:10*

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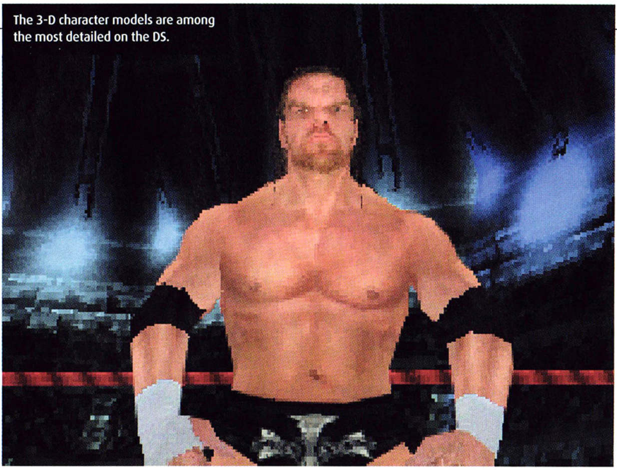
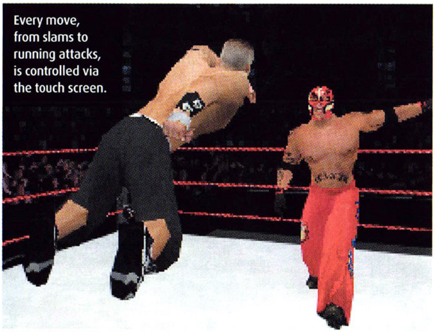


The 3-D character models are among the most detailed on the DS.

> **“We wanted to utilize the features that make the DS such a unique platform.”**
> —Tony Sharma, creative manager



Every move, from slams to running attacks, is controlled via the touch screen.

build power for a wind-up punch.

“The three attack options not only afford a great variety of maneuvers for players to execute,” Sharma explains, “but also add a more strategic element to the game. Do I go for a quick strike or go for a riskier big move, and what type of move is my opponent going for? If one player goes for a big move and gets struck during it, he or she will shrug it off and be able to pick up the touch-screen interaction from exactly where it left off. This will let players finish the move before another strike can come in.”

Even if you’re on the receiving end of punishment (in a submission hold, for example), you’ll have options to fight your way out. And while the action’s unfolding on the lower screen, the top screen plays host to plenty of useful information, such as the status of the superstars in the ring, instructions for executing moves, and the names of moves being used.

Like its console counterpart, the DS version of SVR 2008 will offer plenty of features, including 20 or more superstars from Raw, SmackDown, and ECW, local-wireless competition for two players, and a single-player season mode. By playing through season mode, you’ll be able to access weapons and call in allies that you can utilize during exhibition or versus bouts. And although the game will feature only one-on-one matches (no tag matches or multiperson contests), several match variations will be included—unfortunately, THQ isn’t divulging any details yet.

Whether you lock up on Wii or DS, WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2008 is promising sports entertainment as you’ve never experienced it before—and from what we’ve seen so far, both versions are set to deliver. So if you still aren’t ready, you’d better start training. The action arrives this fall.

# BRAWL EVOLVES

## The Current State of Smash

By Andy Myers

Details on Super Smash Bros. Brawl for Wii are trickling down to fans thanks to a daily blog on www.smashbros.com. Each weekday, series mastermind Masahiro Sakurai reveals something new, be it an item, a stage, a song, or even a surprise character. We've been gobbling up the info here at NP while speculating wildly about everything we lay our eyes on. Is that a Fire Emblem stage? Exactly what happens when Wario passes gas? Will Link transform into a wolf? Only time will tell—for now, here's what we know.

**Bowser**

Looking more ferocious than ever, series slowpoke Bowser will make his triumphant return in Brawl.

### Characters

The cast of playable characters is quickly expanding, but it has yet to be revealed if any third-party character other than Snake will appear in Brawl, or if series mainstays like Luigi and Ness will return. We're betting yes, but its really anyone's guess at this point. Below is the list of confirmed brawlers in the order they were announced (up to date as of July 6).

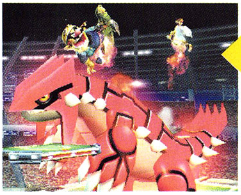
*1) Mario*
*2) Link*
*3) Kirby*
*4) Pikachu*
*5) Meta Knight*
*6) Pit*
*7) Samus*
*8) Zero Suit Samus*
*9) Wario*
*10) Snake*
*11) Fox McCloud*
*12) Zelda*
*13) Bowser*

**Zelda**

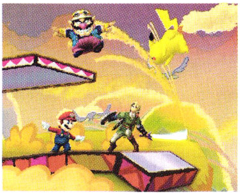
The diva of Hyrule will sport a new look in Brawl based on her Twilight Princess duds. But will she still be able to transform to Sheik like her Ocarina of Time version?

**Zero Suit Samus**

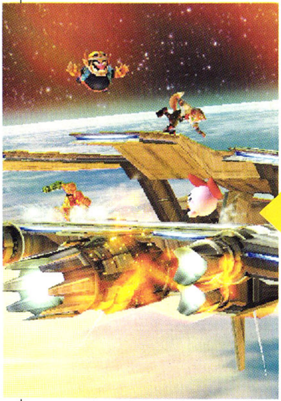
We know that Zero Suit Samus will emerge from her classic power suit at some point in the game, but are she and the standard Samus two forms within the same character?



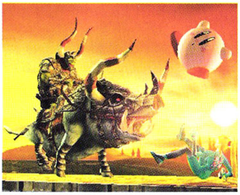
Poké Balls aren't much different from how they were in Melee, but what's inside them is.



All four seasons are represented on the Yoshi's Island stage.



Star Fox-themed stage Lylat Cruise will put brawlers on the back of the *Pleiades* as the ship enters Corneria's atmosphere.



Hyrule will hold plenty of surprises, including an uninvited guest: King Bulblin!

## Items

Poké Balls and barrels will be returning, joined by new items such as Gooey Bombs, Cracker Launchers, and Assist Trophies.

## Music

Brawl's composer list reads like a who's who of video games, but the proof is really in the pudding. Check out the various samples on Smash Bros. Dojo, including an amazing Ocarina of Time medley by the man himself, Nintendo legend Koji Kondo.

## Control

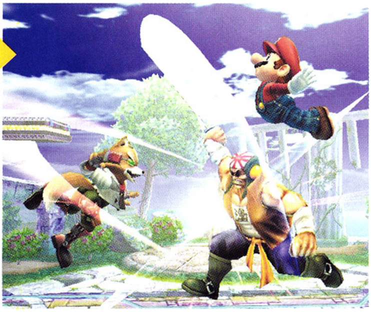
Because Brawl is exclusive to Wii, many have wondered how motion control will work, or if motion control will even be attempted. It's still up in the air, but we do know that the game will allow for four different control configurations, including one for the GameCube controller and one for the Classic controller. See the site for more info, including how you'll perform Smash moves.

## Stages

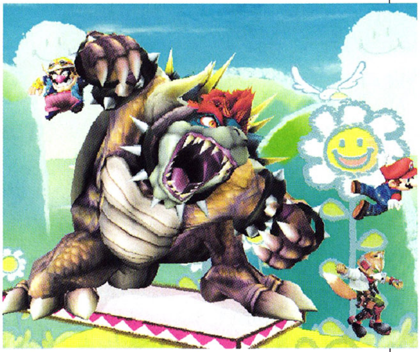
Each of the four confirmed stages will transform in some way during a fight. Delfino Plaza, for instance, will begin on a platform in the skies, then land somewhere on the island. Based on screenshots and videos, we also suspect a Mario Kart stage, a Kid Icarus stage, and a Fire Emblem stage are in the works.

## Final Smash

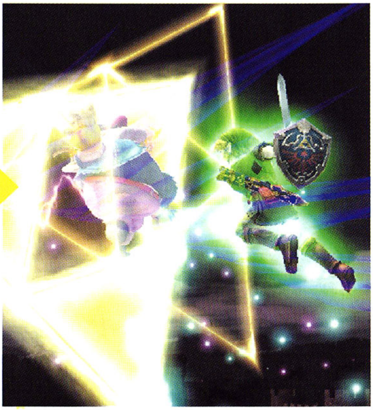
One of the most potent inclusions in Brawl will be a character-specific special move for each fighter, known simply as a Final Smash. Each character has only one Final Smash move, and judging by what we've seen, they're going to be devastatingly awesome. To perform a Final Smash, you'll need to obtain a coveted item known as a Smash Ball midbattle.



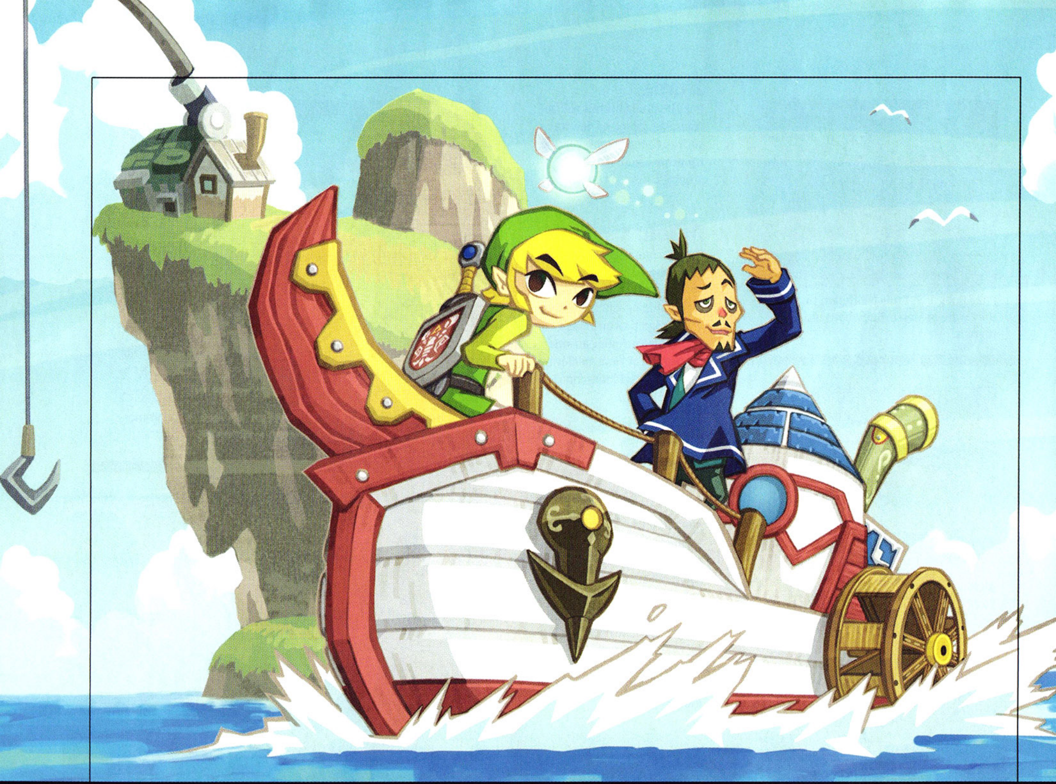
Assist Trophies will bring you a temporary ally such as a Hammer Bro, Samurai Goro from F-Zero, or even a Nintendog.



Bowser's Final Smash? You guessed it: Giga Bowser!



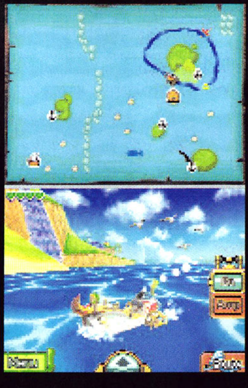
Link's Final Smash move looks to be the coolest yet, slashing up opponents with the power of the Triforce!



# UNCHARTED WATERS

**The Legend of Zelda: Phantom Hourglass** is ready to hoist anchor and take gamers on an innovative new adventure this fall. Will you have the magic touch, or will the Ghost Ship claim another victim on the high seas?

By Drew Williams



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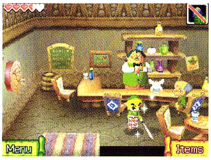
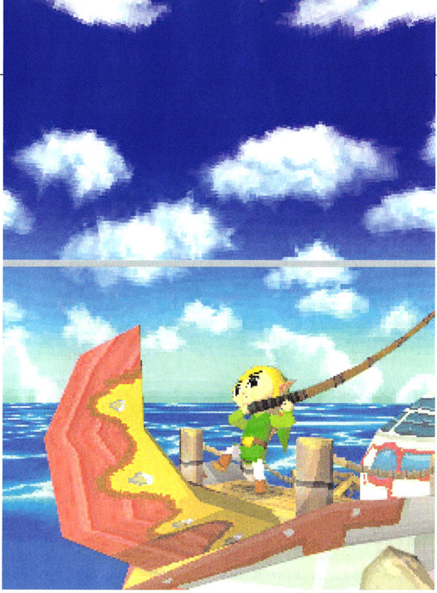
# Revisit a Wind-Born World

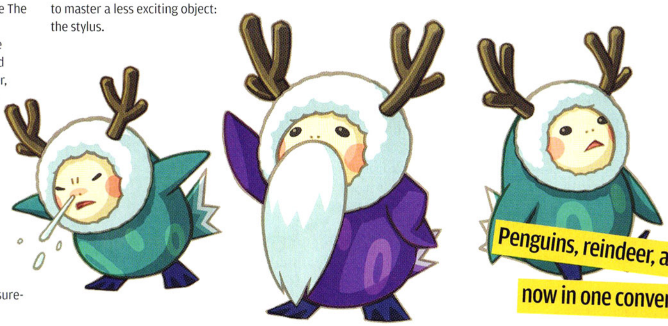
**When The Legend of Zelda: The Wind** Waker came to the GameCube in 2003, it stirred up a minor controversy with its art style. Fans expecting a greater move toward realism in the series were disappointed and many of them failed to see the tremendous dividends of the design decision: The Wind Waker's characters—particularly Link—became far more expressive than in previous Zelda titles and the game's stylized look freed up system power to drive stunning environmental effects. Phantom Hourglass—a true sequel to the landmark GameCube game—takes the innovation a step further by implementing a button-free interface on the DS. It features the same classic game structure that created an army of Zelda zealots, but the control scheme engenders a new experience that fans of the series shouldn't miss out on.

Soon after you tap the touch screen to get started, you'll discover that the game picks up more or less where The Wind Waker left off: Zelda has resumed the identity of Tetra, the pirate queen of the high seas, and Link has joined her crew. However, before Link even has a chance to go to the head, a ghost ship whisks Tetra off to some blank space on the map and deposits our hero on the shores of Mercay Island. After acquiring a sword and a couple of companions (Linebeck the ship captain and Ciela the fairy), Link heads back out to sea in a customizable steam ship so he can access treasure-laden temples.

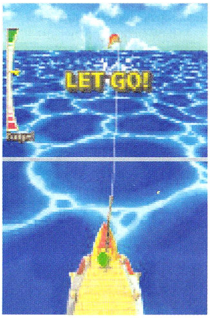
Each time you successfully explore a temple, you'll return to Mercay Island so you can venture deeper and deeper into the Temple of the Ocean King to find the clue to reach the *next* temple. The key to exploring this central temple is the titular Phantom Hourglass—each boss you defeat will add sand to the device and give you more time to delve into the haunted building's nooks and crannies. If you manage to collect all the items, spirits, and keys, you should be able to rescue Zelda/Tetra. But first you'll need to master a less exciting object: the stylus.



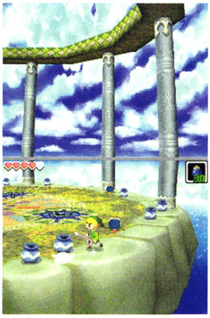




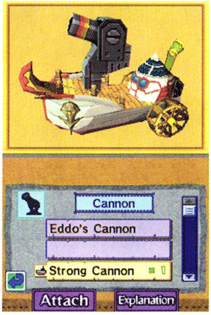
Penguins, reindeer, and Eskimos—now in one convenient species!



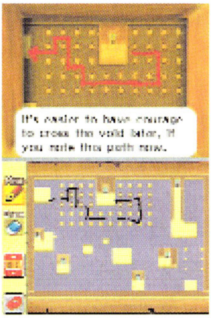
There's always something fun to do in Phantom Hourglass. Fishing is genuinely fun and challenging.



Although you'll have a fixed camera angle when you explore on foot, the game offers rich 3-D environments.



If you don't like the look of your ship, you can head to the shipyards to customize it.



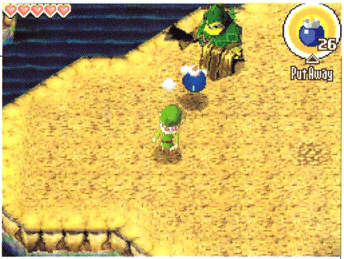
It's easier to have courage to cross the void later, if you note this path now.

You'll need to take plenty of notes on your maps if you expect to find critical items and information.

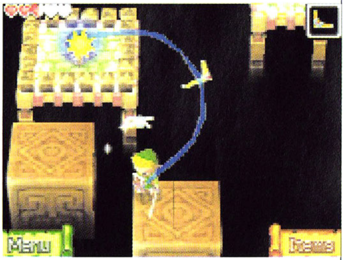
# Touching: Not Just Good, but Essential

**Although there are a few** helpful button macros to aid advanced players—the shoulder buttons can be used to select an equipped item, for example—and you occasionally blow or talk into the microphone, gameplay in Phantom Hourglass is almost entirely directed via the touch screen. Link's movement is controlled by touching the stylus to the screen. To make him move slowly and quietly, keep the stylus near him; to make Link sprint, hold the stylus near the edges of the screen. Items, maps, and status information are accessed using two pull-out menus in the lower corners of the screen. Chucking the pause-and-select items screen in favor of on-the-fly menus really helps to streamline the game and keeps your adrenaline pumping during fights.

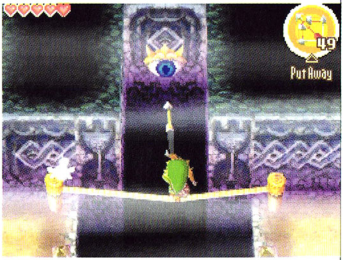
As in all Zelda games, your sword is the primary weapon you'll rely upon to dispatch bad guys (an accomplishment signaled, as in Wind Waker, by a satisfying "smack" noise and a cartoon puff of smoke). To attack an enemy, you simply tap it with the stylus to bring down an overhand strike. To slash horizontally at an enemy, you draw a line in the space that separates link and his foe. You execute a spin attack by rapidly drawing a circle around Link. The combat is quite intuitive and allows you to integrate secondary items, like the bow and boomerang, with ease. When the bow is equipped, all you need to do is tap the screen in the direction you want to fire an arrow. You can hurl the boomerang with great precision by drawing a desired path on the touch screen (the Bombchu is guided in a similar fashion). The hammer is wielded by Ciela, so Link can deliver devastating long-distance blows without working up a sweat. Perhaps the most evolved item is the grappling hook. As in The Wind Waker, you can use the device to pull yourself to otherwise unreachable locations. In Phantom Hourglass, you can also use it like a tight rope to bridge gaps. You can even stand on the rope mid-span, equip your bow, then shoot arrows into hard-to-reach spots—which are abundant. The islands and temples are loaded with the signature environmental puzzles that make all the Zelda games addictive. The surprise is that the level designers didn't just contrive 3-D-ish versions of the top-down puzzles in classic Zelda outings, but created mind-bending spaces that will remind you of games like Ocarina of Time and, of course, The Wind Waker. The touch screen also allows for some new kinds of puzzles that have never been seen in a Zelda game. You are repeatedly asked to make notes on the positions of treasure and to copy maps and symbols—a simple enough task when you can shift maps and sea charts to the touch screen, then mark them up with the stylus. You'll also need to engage in more sophisticated draftsmanship; to solve certain puzzles, you must generate your own ad hoc maps on top of maps (you can erase them later) and perform some simple geometry to uncover secret passages.



The touch screen affords Link great freedom in combat. Switch items on the fly and attack a number of ways.



You can take precise aim with the boomerang by drawing a path with the stylus.



Use the grappling hook to form a tight rope to bridge chasms. Link can stand on the rope then use his bow, if necessary.

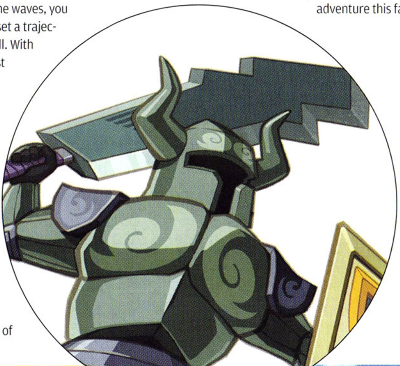
Looking too closely at treasure maps will put nasty rings under your eyes.

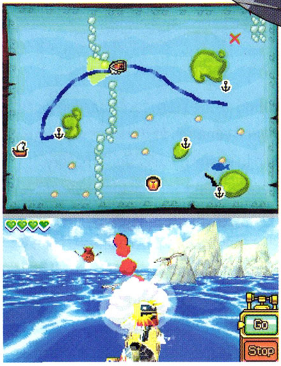
# Wanderlust on the Water

**As in The Wind Waker**, you'll spend a fair amount of time on the open ocean in Phantom Hourglass—and the depth of the sailing experience alone would be enough to satisfy the design requirements of a lesser game. Linebeck's ship is a customizable marvel that you steer by plotting a course on a sea chart (you discover various sea charts in portions of the game). Just tap Route on the touch screen then draw a path to any location on the map—you'll automatically shove off and set sail. Don't think you can sit back during the voyage and sip ice tea on the lido deck, however. The ocean is filled with hazards that range from sea monsters big and small to pesky pirates who chase you down and damage your ship. The good news is that you can use a retractable cannon to defend yourself. While you are under way, you can swing the camera around the ship to look in any direction; when enemies appear from beneath the waves, you tap a spot on the horizon to set a trajectory and launch a cannon ball. With a bit of practice, you can blast enemies before they know what hit them. You can also make your ship porpoise into the air—by touching an arrow icon—when hazards can't be blasted away with cannon fire.

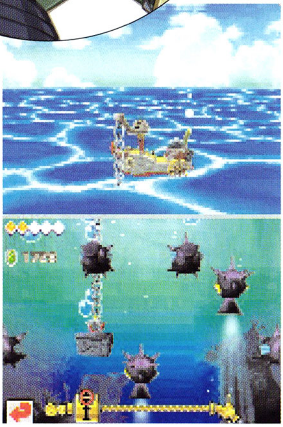
Of course, there's more to sailing than combat. You can fish for exotic sea creatures, board other vessels (to shop, meet characters, etc.), and extract treasure and objects from the bottom of the sea with the salvage arm on your ship. Salvaging items at sea is another holdover from The Wind Waker, but Phantom Hourglass takes what was an automatic activity in the GameCube title and turns it into a fun minigame. Using a control icon on the touch screen, you can guide the salvage arm through explosive enemies to grab objects on the seafloor. Suffice it to say, when you aren't slashing your way through temples, you'll find plenty to do out on the high seas.

We've given you a look at many of Phantom Hourglass's innovations, but the game is so rich with ideas and surprises that it's a hopeless cause to attempt comprehensive coverage of the game in a few pages. And who would want that, anyway? A big part of the Zelda magic is the joy of discovery. Grab your Master Sword and your pointy green hat, and get ready for an awfully big adventure this fall.





Tap enemies on the touch screen to blow them out of the water. If you let them get too close, they'll damage your ship.

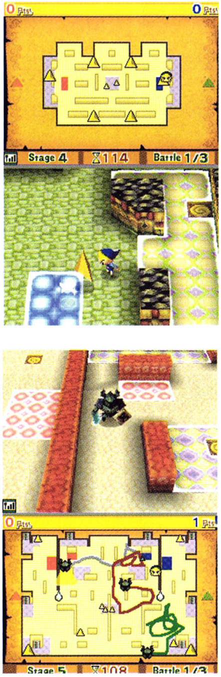


Salvaging items from the ocean floor is a fun game in its own right. Watch out for dangerous creatures who prowl the depths!

DRAW, THEN QUARTER

## Hide and Sneak

Phantom Hourglass's Battle mode—which is played against one other competitor through either a local connection or Wi-Fi—has a somewhat misleading name. The game involves no actual combat, but challenges players to a fast-paced game of cat-and-mouse between Link and three Phantoms in a variety of mazes. The player controlling the Phantoms plots the courses of the lumbering sentinels in an effort to catch Link; the player controlling Link tries to toss Force Gems into color-coded areas of the maze to earn points. The players switch sides when Link is caught or when time runs out—whichever comes first.

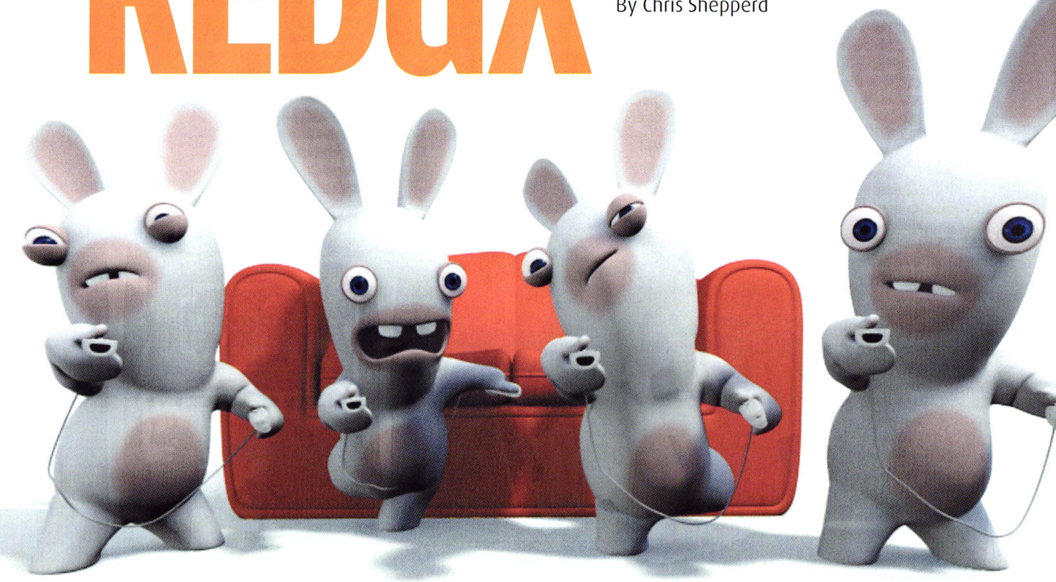


Eight different mazes mean players will need to adjust their strategies to come out on top.

# RABBIDS REDUX

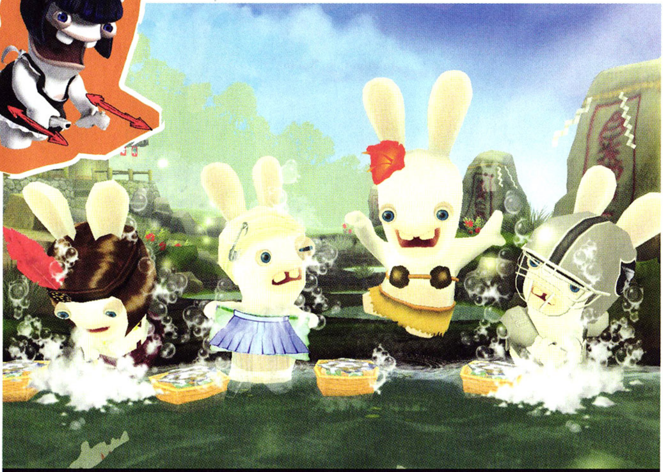
## Rayman Raving Rabbids 2 continues the hare-raising fun for Wii this fall. We get an early look at Ubisoft's twisted party game.

By Chris Shepperd



Looking around at the stern faces hard at work in the crowded confines of Ubisoft's development studio in eastern Paris, you'd hardly believe what they were working on. But somewhere among the rows of droning computers and serious discussions among the team's 60 or so programmers, one of the funniest, most energetic games to hit the Wii is springing to life. Rayman Raving Rabbids 2, the sequel to the successful and critically acclaimed launch title is well underway, with new games, new locales, and a new development philosophy. We got a chance to sit down with members of the team to discuss their ideas for Raving Rabbids 2, as well as to play some of the new, multiplayer-focused minigames that define the upcoming Wii-exclusive title.

**Like the first game, Rayman** Raving Rabbids 2 is essentially a minigame collection featuring Rayman and a pack of goofy, evildoing bunnies. But with a greater focus on multiplayer action, very little will feel like a rehash from the original title. Raving Rabbids 2 feels more like a party game than anything else, but any comparison to existing party games isn't quite perfect. Because the developers are looking to keep the players occupied and entertained virtually without pause, a lot of the mundane traditional party-game aspects have been stripped out. When you play with your friends, you create a customized playlist of the games you want to play. You can choose the games directly, or simply set up parameters and let the computer pick the minigames for you. For example, you can tell it to put together a list of games that won't take longer than 15 minutes to complete, and the computer will fit in a variety of games to suit. Scores are ranked after each game and totaled at the end. The team believes that a weightier scorekeeping system would bog down the flow of the gameplay. Product manager Loic Guonon explains, "The idea is to break all the constraints of previous party games. One of the constraints we saw in Mario Party is that it's a board game and you have to play one game after another, and we've heard from players that it's quite boring. So our approach is to have as much flexibility as possible."



Customize your Rabbids in all kinds of ways, including dressing them in football helmets and coconut bikinis.

> **"We decided to go with the Wii for Rayman and forget all the other consoles, even as ports; they wouldn't be as interesting without the Wii controls."**
> **—Xavier Poix**

In concert with this more flexible approach is a game that will be accessible to all skill levels. For each minigame there are two difficulty modes—Challenge and Fun. The differences between the two modes aren't always simply in how many enemies are on the screen or how much time you have; sometimes the action is the same but the controls in the Fun versions are pared down or the Wii-remote motions are more forgiving. Raving Rabbids 2 will keep high-score records for the two modes individually, but only the high scores for Challenge mode will be uploaded to the online leaderboard (more on that later).

From the outset of the sequel's development, the focus has been on making a game that takes advantage of the Wii's unique traits. One benefit is improved graphical quality over the previous game. Raving Rabbids 2 producer Nino Sapina explains, "We know the Wii a lot better now than we did before." Executive producer Xavier Poix (who held the same title for the first Rabbids game) emphasizes the importance of Wii exclusivity for the new game. "For all the games that we saw, no one was really taking into account what the Wii was about: having fun, having fun with partners when

Part of the charm of Raving Rabbids 2 comes from consistent art direction, as well as talented team capable of translating the artists' visions.

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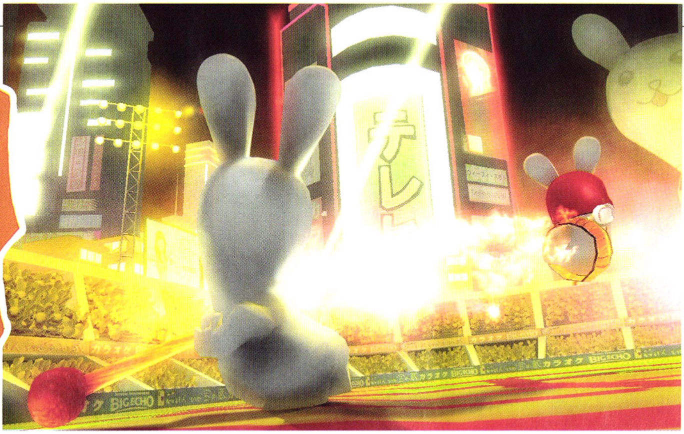


you play, and having fun on the screen and outside the screen. We decided to go with the Wii for Rayman and forget all the other consoles, even as ports; they wouldn't be as interesting without the Wii controls," Xavier states. When he says that it's important to make a game that's fun both on the screen and outside the screen, he means it: it's often as fun to watch the players as they joust in the minigames as it is to see what's happening in the game itself.

## BRED FOR FUN

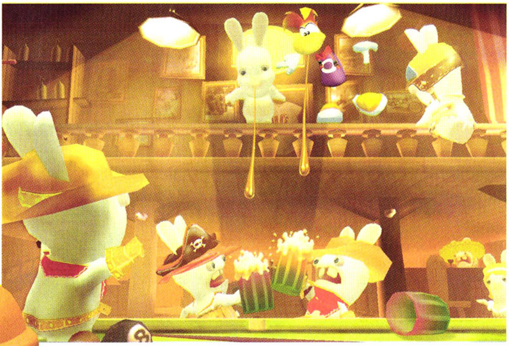
Similar to how Mario shares the spotlight evenly with all his cohorts in the Mario Party games, Rayman takes a smaller role in Raving Rabbids 2 than he has in the past. He's always available as a playable character, and in a single-player campaign you'll play as the limbless one. But in multiplayer events, nobody is required to play as Rayman—all four participants could be various forms of Rabbids if they so desired. The look of the Rabbids is highly customizable, so telling each other's Rabbids apart isn't a problem.

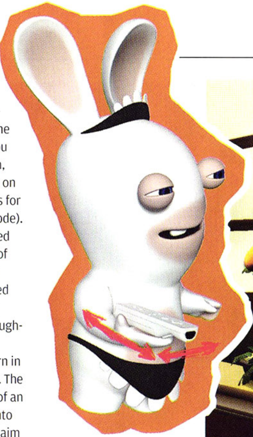
The creative team behind the Rabbids sees their new characters as something they can build from for a long time to come. For one, the simplicity of the Rabbids' design makes them able to take on a lot of different themes simply by donning new costumes. Also, the Rabbids' charming naughtiness hits on multiple levels, so both children and adults find them hilarious. Xavier says, "We see the Rabbid character as the type of character Nintendo could invent, but they wouldn't because it's not their style—the Rabbids are designed in a more humoristic way, and a bit more edgy." Xavier also hints that there might be more in store for the Rabbids than just the continuation of the series. "We're working on building the branding of the Rabbids because we want them to be big in the future, and not necessarily just on the games side," Xavier hints.

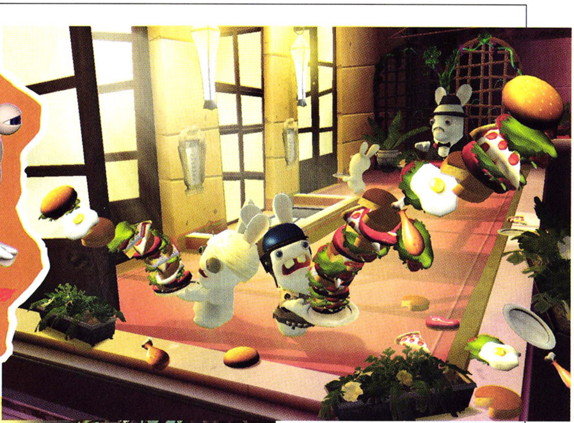
## NONSTOP ACTION

We were able to get hands-on time with a lot of the new minigames, and it didn't take long to see the philosophical changes behind the games. Foremost was the idea of simultaneous multiplayer—nearly all the games we demoed were frantic, four-player bouts. Very seldom were people sitting around and watching one person play. "We made a few mistakes with the first Rayman Rabbids game in this regard—the turn-by-turn aspect, mostly. We've studied a lot of these past mistakes, and we hope that for this game we've fixed a lot of the accessibility issues," Xavier admits. Loic explains, "the first game wasn't supposed to be a multiplayer game, but we added some multiplayer at the end. We're designing Rabbids 2 as a multiplayer game first." The team estimates that about 70% of the minigames will be simultaneous multiplayer. Another aspect that has been rethought is all the vigorous arm-shaking; the events in Rabbids 2 depend more on timing and dexterity.

The first minigame we played took place in a cinema, where the Rabbids insist on calling their friends to tell them about the movie playing. When the theater usher turns the lights out, all the players hold the Wii remote to their ears like they're talking on a







When Raving Rabbids 2's artists sketched out the serene dinner scene, they could hardly have imagined the chaos the Rabbids would serve up.

> **"The first game wasn't suppose to be a multiplayer game, but we added some multiplayer at the end. We're designing Rabbids 2 as a multiplayer game first."**
> **—Xavier Poix**

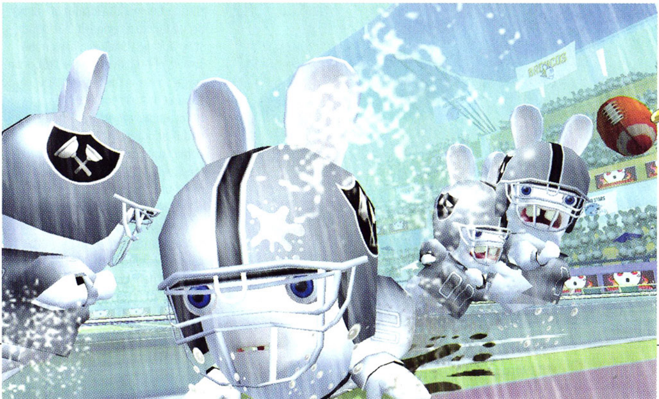
phone. Just when the usher is about to turn on the lights, everyone must put the phone down. If he catches you still chatting away, you lose points. While the lights are on, you can rapidly push the A Button on the Wii remote to text the Rabbids for extra points (only in Challenge mode). It's a pretty simple variation on Red Light-Green Light, but the voices of the Rabbids babbling through the speaker on the Wii Remote coupled with the reactions of the Rabbids when they get caught talking is laugh-out-loud funny.

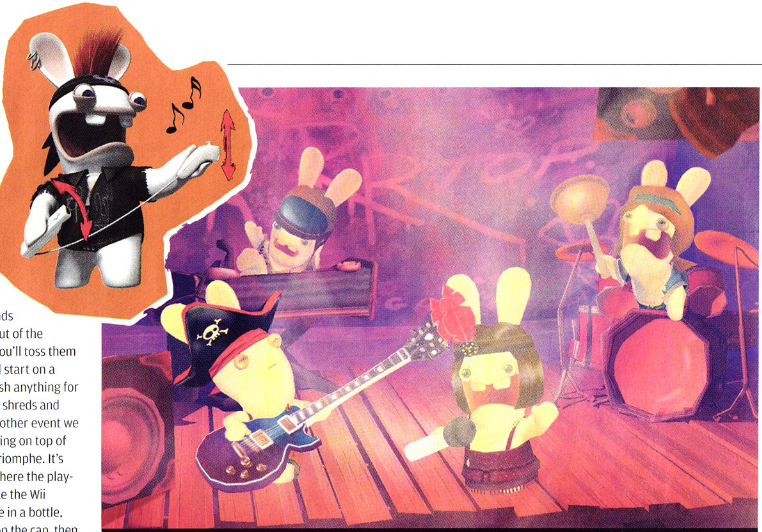
Then our demo took a crude turn in the form of a saloon spitting game. The Rabbids stand along the balcony of an Old West saloon and try to hock into the glasses on the bar below. You aim your spit by rocking the controller back and forth in your hand, then let loose your drool by pressing the A Button. If you land your spit in one of the lower glasses you'll earn points; the farther away the mug is, the more points you earn. It's more challenging than it sounds—you have to keep track of the mugs along the bottom, as well as maintain the momentum of the spit that's dangling like a pendulum from your lip.

The next two events we played were prime examples of the how the Rabbids try and fail to blend in with the culture around them. In their interpretation of American football, the Rabbids' game degenerates into a messy keep-away contest. One player has the ball while all the others try to tackle him. The ballcarrier can't tackle, but the other players can tackle each other as well as the primary target; sometimes it's smart to tackle another pursuer to preserve your own lead. The next minigame is loosely based on the Tour de France—*loosely*. The players pair up in a co-op bicycling event—one player steers the two-wheeler up a hill, around obstacles such as livestock and falling rocks, while the other player propels the bike using a pedaling motion with the Wii remote and nunchuk. Both games are representative of a lot of the activities in Raving Rabbids 2—they're simple to understand, but they're still challenging. And, there's just enough luck in the equation to level the playing field for all the contestants.

One of the most popular games around the Ubisoft offices involves serving burgers. The four Rabbid waiters try to take hamburgers to a waiting costumer sitting on a balcony; the players hold the nunchuk as if balancing a tray. You can bump the other waiters to knock layers off their burgers, which will result in fewer points awarded to them after every successful service. The game gets more intense as you play because the burgers keep getting taller and taller.

Humor is a central focus of a lot of the events, and if the games we played





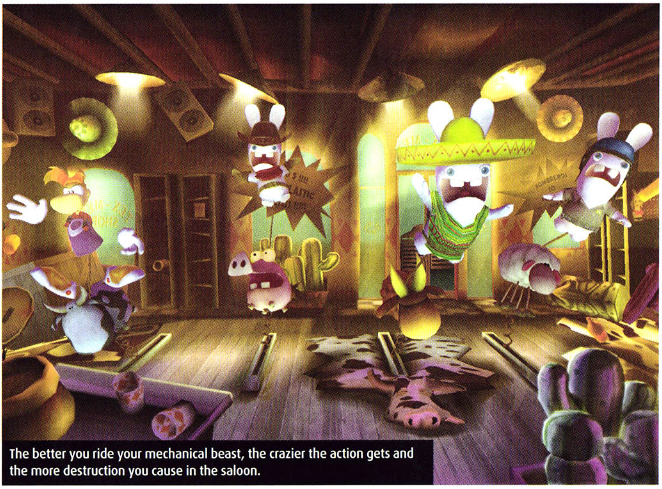
Just like playing in a real band, the true goal is to be the loudest Rabbid on stage.

are any indication, the team is nailing the funny. In one we had to scrub undergarments in a river by moving the nunchuk and remote back and forth rapidly. The trick is that you can't see the progress of your chores; you lift both hands up to raise the undies out of the water. If they're clean, you'll toss them aside automatically and start on a new garment. If you wash anything for too long, you'll tear it to shreds and not get any points. In another event we found ourselves picnicking on top of Paris's famous Arc de Triomphe. It's one of the few games where the players take turns; you shake the Wii remote to build pressure in a bottle, press the A button to pop the cap, then lift the remote as if you're taking a swig of the fizzy soda. If you do everything just right, you'll let out a burp that'll shatter the windows down the Champs-Elysées; the more damage you do, the more points you earn.

While fewer games in Raving Rabbids 2 require you to shake the Wii remote mercilessly, there are still plenty of events that require some real dexterity. Our next one put four players on mechanical bulls. Instead of just wiggling the remote as fast as possible, you have to pace your movements in time with the bucking motion of the bulls. All the while, the characters are bouncing out of their seats, knocking paintings off the walls and frosty mugs off the bar. We thought we were getting a pretty high score—until we watched creative director Nicolas Normandon school us. We did a little better on our second time through, but it's evident that some of the games will take some serious practice.

One of the big highlights from the first Rayman Raving Rabbids was the up-tempo rail-shooter levels that served as the final challenges of some stages. They're back in a big way—the new cinematic look to the levels is revolutionary. The game's producers can barely contain their excitement: "This is a totally new technique; it just didn't exist before. It took about six months to develop the technology before we were sure we could actually do it," Nicolas beams. The locales are appropriate for each region—the shooting stage for the US takes place on the streets of Brooklyn and the European stage occurs in the famous Lido Cabaret in Paris, for example. Unfortunately, they aren't quite ready to talk about the new concept in any detail, but we can tell you that what they're doing is certainly amazing—it's the kind of leap in game design that will cause people to look back fondly on Raving Rabbids 2 for years to come.

> **"The idea always is to have a humorous approach and not to be too difficult. We're not trying to be Guitar Hero; it's more for the players to have fun together."**
> **—Nicolas Normandon**

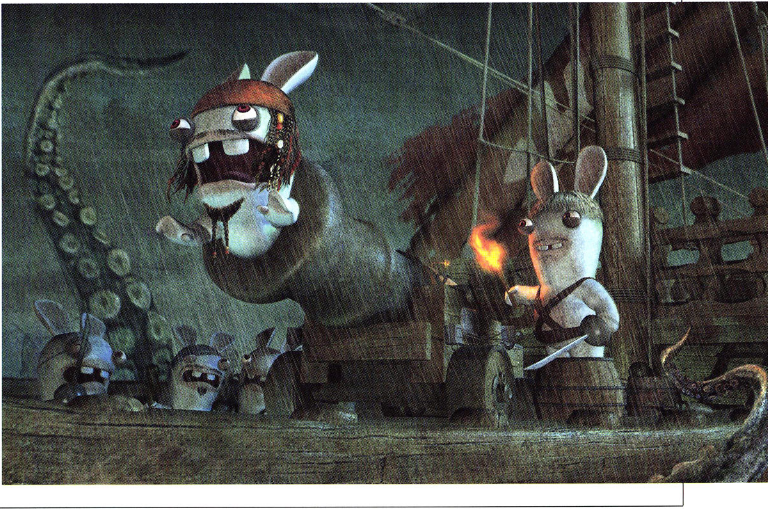


The better you ride your mechanical beast, the crazier the action gets and the more destruction you cause in the saloon.

Another favorite from the first game, the musical rhythm stages, also return in Rabbids 2, but they have been significantly overhauled to be a lot more fun. Whereas before you moved

Give the Rabbids some credit—trying to steal the Statue of Liberty's torch is ambitious, to stay the least. Now it's up to you to spot the culprit.

the nunchuk and remote with the rhythm to keep the Rabbids dancing, this time you're on stage as part of a band. In keeping with the multiplayer focus of the game in general, all four players can jam at the same time, with each person playing along to the beat of his own instrument (or insane bunny voice). "We tried to select songs that had four instruments that could be easily recognized," Xavier says. While the notes slide down columns, the players must shake the nunchuk or remote at the precise time the remote reaches the bottom of the column. Depending on how accurately you hit the note, your instrument will play a little louder; when everyone hits their notes perfectly, the cacophony is a riot. The developers encouraged us to hold the controllers like we were air-guitaring or pounding on a drum set, but you can shake them any way you want. When it's your turn to solo, a different set of icons will pop up to show you what to do. "The idea always is to have a humorous approach and not to be too difficult. We're not trying to be like Guitar Hero; it's more for the players to have fun together. It's also important that you feel like you're doing well, no matter the difficulty," Nicolas remarks. The music hasn't been finalized yet, but the team promises to have the same kinds of instantly recognizable hits that made the first Rabbids dance levels so memorable.



## SINGLES, ANYONE?

With the emphasis being squarely on multiplayer fun, the storyline for the single-player mode isn't exactly hard-hitting drama. But it does set a general tone for the minigames. After failing to take control of Rayman's world in the first Raving Rabbids, the devilish bunnies turn their attention to planet Earth. The bunnies' grand scheme is to integrate themselves into the regular activities of the humans in an effort to take over bit by bit, until the Rabbids control the world. Rayman must travel to different locales—the United States, Asia, Europe, and South America—to catch the bunnies red-handed. Fortunately for Rayman, the Rabbids are pretty stupid—they don't quite understand the daily events of humans, and their misinterpretations lead to some comical minigames. In Europe, for example, they try to take over the Tour de France, while in the United States they attempt to rodeo their way to domination.

The single-player mode is organized by region—when you choose a certain part of the world, you'll compete in events from that section only. Each time through a locale, you'll play only five of the minigames, then one musical performance and one shooter level. The five levels you play appear to be random, but actually there's a little sleight of hand going on behind the scenes. Every time you play a region, the game checks out which activities you've done the least and makes it more likely that those will be included among the five you play. That way, every trip through a specific region will be different from the time before. It's worth playing through the regions more than once just to challenge all the minigames—there are tons of unlockables that are based not only on completing the region, but on high score as well.

A nifty feature of the single-player mode is a global high-score leaderboard accessible via Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection. The leaderboard is updated after every event and displayed in-game—no need to write down a code and input it into a website like with the first Rabbids game.

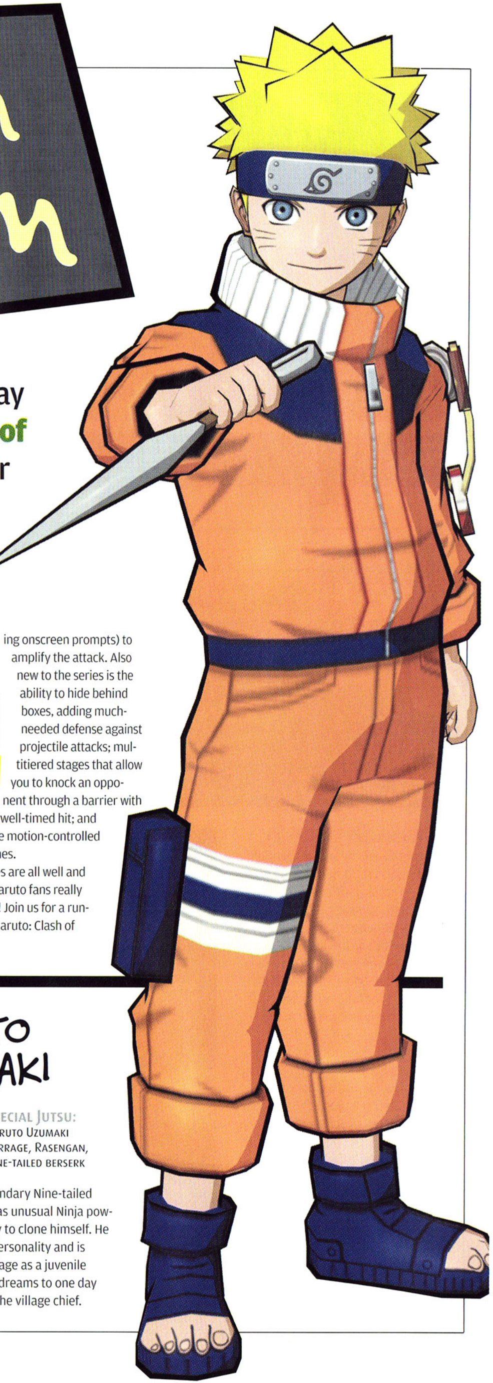
## BUNNY LOVE

With the game scheduled for release around the end of November, the development team is still putting the finishing touches on many of the minigames. In addition to a big FPS-level secret, they still have a few surprises in store for us before launch. But judging by what we've already seen, Rayman Raving Rabbids 2 should be another chart-topper.

# Clash Is in Session

## Anime's poster boy is making his way to Wii in the form of **Naruto: Clash of Ninja Revolution**. Are you ready for some furious jutsu action?

By Andy Myers



## Clash of Ninja 101

Unless you've been hiding in a bomb shelter for the past year, Naruto needs no introduction—but his upcoming Wii game Clash of Ninja Revolution does. This third installment in the Clash of Ninja series (the first two being on GameCube) is a four-player brawler that brings to life characters, locations, and the flashy ninja fighting style of the popular anime. At a glance, Revolution looks quite a bit like its predecessors—and in many ways, it is. Familiar characters are returning, with similar fighting styles and special moves. But Revolution also has a number of new offerings that will go a long way toward appeasing the notoriously rabid Naruto fan base. In producer Ken Shimamura's words, "We're hoping to be able to deliver a new experience that really enables the fans to become absorbed in the action while still maintaining the meat of what Clash of Ninja is all about."

Much of the new experience is achieved through motion control. "We wanted to implement motions that wouldn't alienate the fans of the previous Clash of Ninja games," explains Shimamura. Rather than a GameCube controller, you'll now enter every battle wielding the Wii remote and nunchuk, with remote swings taking the place of standard button attacks. Once you've filled up your Chakra meter, you can unleash character-specific jutsu attacks as before, such as Naruto's Barrage move. But to make the most of the opportunity, you must accurately perform movements with the Wii remote and nunchuk (following onscreen prompts) to amplify the attack. Also new to the series is the ability to hide behind boxes, adding much-needed defense against projectile attacks; multitiered stages that allow you to knock an opponent through a barrier with a well-timed hit; and three motion-controlled minigames.

New features are all well and good, but we know what Naruto fans really care about: the characters! Join us for a rundown of the crazy cast of Naruto: Clash of Ninja Revolution.

## NARUTO UZUMAKI

| SERIES DEBUT: | SPECIAL JUTSU: |
|---|---|
| CLASH OF NINJA | NARUTO UZUMAKI BARRAGE, RASENGAN, NINE-TAILED BERSERK |

Being host to the legendary Nine-tailed Demon Fox, Naruto has unusual Ninja powers, such as the ability to clone himself. He also has an unusual personality and is known around the village as a juvenile prankster despite his dreams to one day become the Hokage, the village chief.

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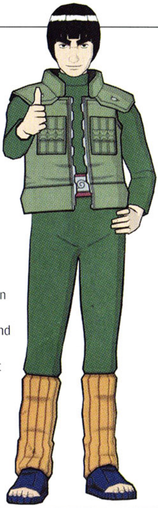
## MIGHT GUY

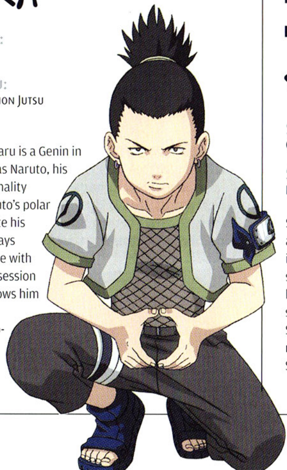


**Series Debut:**
Clash of Ninja 2

**Special Jutsu:**
Youthful Embrace

Leader of Team Guy, sensei to Rock Lee, and self-proclaimed rival of Kakashi, Might Guy (seen here giving his trademark thumbs-up) is a fierce fighter and a master of hand-to-hand Taijutsu. His fiery temperament coupled with his Strong Fist style of fighting makes him a formidable opponent in battle. But it can also lead to reckless decision-making.

## SHIKAMARU NARA



**Series Debut:**
Clash of Ninja 2

**Special Jutsu:**
Shadow Possession Jutsu

Though Shikamaru is a Genin in the same class as Naruto, his laid-back personality makes him Naruto's polar opposite. Despite his laziness, he always steps up in battle with his Shadow Possession Jutsu, which allows him to temporarily control his opponent's actions.

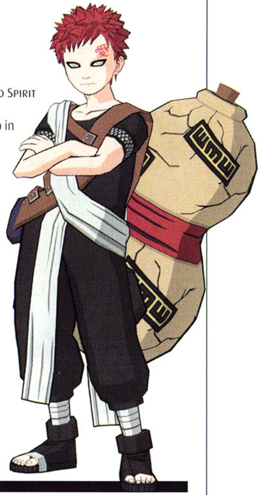
## SASUKE UCHIHA

**Series Debut:**
Clash of Ninja

**Special Jutsu:**
Lions Barrage, Chidori,
Fire Style: Phoenix Flower Jutsu

Ever popular with the ladies, Sasuke is one of the Ninja Academy's brightest. But his obsession with becoming powerful enough to defeat his brother, Itachi, makes him dangerous.

## GAARA



**Series Debut:**
Clash of Ninja 2

**Special Jutsu:**
Sand Coffin, Sand Burial, Shukaku, the Sand Spirit

Playing host to the One-Tailed Shukaku demon, Gaara grew up in the Village Hidden in the Sand, and is feared by many for his ability to manipulate vast amounts of sand. To make sure that sand is readily available, Gaara carries some in a large gourd strapped to his back.

## SAKURA HARUNO

**Series Debut:**
Clash of Ninja

**Special Jutsu:**
Inner Sakura, Super Inner Sakura

Sakura displays incredible skill and is well on her way to becoming a Kunoichi, a female ninja. But she often gets sidetracked by boys—particularly Sasuke, whom she has a major crush on. Sakura's bottled-up feelings are released in the form of Inner Sakura, her special Jutsu.

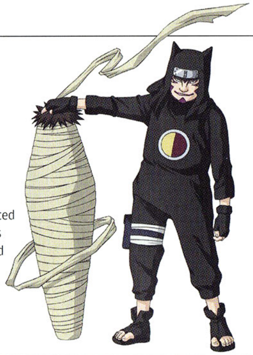
Sakura
46
Gaara
5 Hits Combo

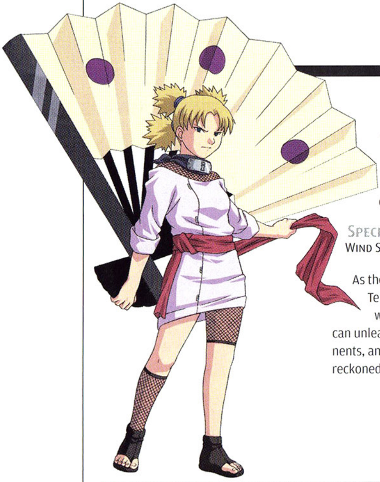
# KANKURO

**SERIES DEBUT:**
CLASH OF NINJA 2

**SPECIAL JUTSU:**
PUPPET MASTER JUTSU

Kankuro is the older brother of Gaara, and a talented puppeteer. During battle, he sometimes unleashes Crow, a weaponized puppet that he keeps wrapped in bandages.





# TEMARI

**SERIES DEBUT:**
CLASH OF NINJA REVOLUTION

**SPECIAL JUTSU:**
WIND SCYTHE

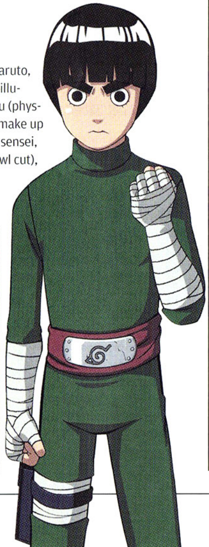
As the elder sister of Gaara and Kankuro, Temari makes her Clash of Ninja debut wielding a large fan for a weapon. She can unleash strong gusts of wind on her opponents, and her Wind Scythe Jutsu is a force to be reckoned with.

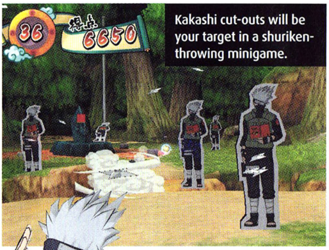
# ROCK LEE

**SERIES DEBUT:**
CLASH OF NINJA

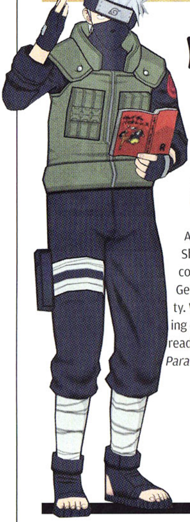
**SPECIAL JUTSU:**
PRIMARY LOTUS,
HIDDEN LOTUS

Hailing from the same village as Naruto, Rock has no Nijutsu techniques or illusionary techniques, but his Taijutsu (physical attacks) and incredible speed make up for it. He has great respect for his sensei, Might Guy (as evidenced by the bowl cut), and a huge crush on Sakura.





Kakashi cut-outs will be your target in a shuriken-throwing minigame.



# KAKASHI HATAKE

**SERIES DEBUT:**
CLASH OF NINJA

**SPECIAL JUTSU:**
LIGHTNING BLADE

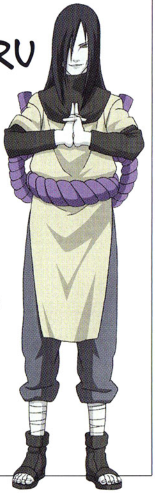
Also known as Kakashi of the Sharingan Eye, this elite ninja combines Ninjutsu, Taijutsu, and Genjutsu for unparalleled versatility. When he's not fighting or training others, he can often be found reading his favorite book, *Make-Out Paradise*.

# OROCHIMARU

**SERIES DEBUT:**
CLASH OF NINJA 2

**SPECIAL JUTSU:**
FIVE-PRONGED SEAL

One of the Legendary Three Ninja, Orochimaru left the Village Hidden in the Leaves long ago to found the Village Hidden in the Sound. He is a ruthless villain with no regard for human life, and will stop at nothing to achieve immortality.



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NINTENDO POWER OFFICIAL MINIGUIDE

# Year of the Hero

Work the soil, woo the ladies, conquer the cave-dwelling monsters—it's all in a year's work in **RUNE FACTORY: A FANTASY HARVEST MOON.**

By George Sinfield

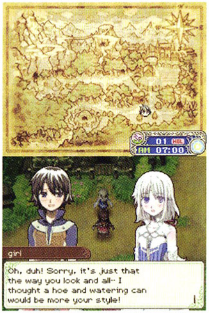
Rune Factory is open-ended, so you can plow through its fields and caves for as long as you want. We'll guide you to the end of the first year in the main adventure; you'll emerge as an experienced farmer and a skilled swordsman. Of course, you'll still probably have a lot to learn about the girls in town.

## SPRING

It's fitting that a game that features farming and growth should begin in spring. You'll start by learning to work the land and plant seasonal crops, such as radishes and strawberries, then accumulate tools that will help you both farm and fight in Kardia's caves. Fighting is new to the Harvest Moon series, but it's key to making progress in Rune Factory.

### Mist and Mystery

As the year begins, you'll arrive at the outskirts of Kardia hungry, tired, and confused about how you got there. Maiden Mist will give you food and a place to stay. The question of your past will have to wait for another day, because there is land to work and there are radishes to grow. You'll encounter an ogre on your first visit to the farm, but dispatch it quickly with your hoe. Before Mist leaves, she'll give you radish seeds. Put small rocks and logs in your sack (you'll need advanced tools to deal with the big stuff) and till the land until you're low on Rune Points. Stand in the middle of a three-by-three square plot, and plant then water the seeds.

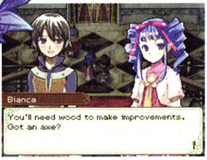


girl

Oh, duh! Sorry, it's just that the way you look and all– I thought a hoe and watering can would be more your style!

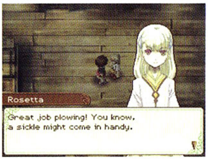
### Tools of the Trades

Your first day in town is a holiday, so most of the businesses are closed. Explore the area north of your house, then go east to the shore. Head to the end of the pier. Sabrina will give you a fishing rod. Go home, save your progress at the nightstand, and rest up. On Day 2, Jasper and his daughter, Bianca, will visit. After they leave, clear and till more land and water your crops. Mist will give you more seeds at noon. Go to town and talk to Bianca twice at her house. She'll give you an axe, which is great for turning logs into workable wood. Talk to Rosetta in the parts store. If you've been working the soil, she'll give you a sickle.



Bianca

You'll need wood to make improvements. Got an axe?



Rosetta

Great job plowing! You know, a sickle might come in handy.

### Cash Crops

The more money you earn, the faster you'll be able to suit up for exploring the caves. Start by fishing off the pier. Put your catches in the box in front of your house; money will come rolling in the next day. Use your earnings to buy strawberry seeds. They take eight days to grow initially, but after that the plants yield fruit every two days. When you have enough gold, buy a seed maker from Ivan and a sword and shield from Leo.

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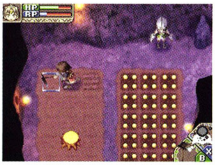
## New Job: Adventurer

Farming and fishing are all well and good, but you've got monsters to tame, too. Once you've tilled at least 100 squares of land, speak to Mayor Godwin. He'll give you a pass to Carmite Cave, which is southeast of the village. Before you explore the underground, though, you'll want to prepare for adventure. Collect an empty bottle from a box in Mist's house (to the right of the fireplace) and another one in the lower-right corner of Jasper and Bianca's basement. Go to the hospital to buy a dose of Roundoff and have Edward fill your bottles with recovery potions. Go to the Parts store and purchase six bags of radish seeds. Also, talk to Bianca's maid Tabitha to get the Friendship Glove. You'll use it, eventually, to soothe monsters so that they'll work on your farm.

## Going Underground

On your first visit to Carmite Cave, Mist will follow you into the first chamber and give you the Escape spell, which you can use at any time to warp to the cave's entrance. As you explore, search for farmable land, till the soil, and plant your radish seeds. You'll find water to nourish your seeds in the cave's river. Be sure to destroy the generators between the soil and the river to clear your watering path. On your way to the second level of the cave, Ivan will catch up with you to give you a radar device. The item will let you know how many enemy generators are on your current level. When you reach the lowest floor, you'll run into Zavier. He'll give you a sleeping bag. Use it to replenish some of your HP (hit points) and RP (rune points).

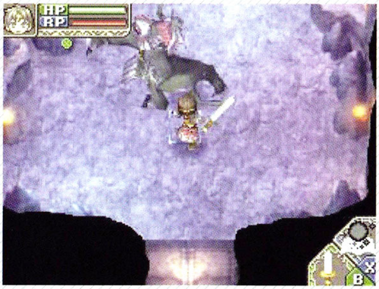


## Vitamins and Iron

Once you've planted your six packs of seeds underground, start a conversation with Leo. He'll give you a hammer. Use the hammer to mine for iron, which you can use to have Leo upgrade tools, such as your watering can. Replenish your recovery potions; return to the cave; and destroy all of the enemy generators on the way to the cave's lowest level.

## Conquering Carmite

**With all of the enemy generators out of commission, the door to the cave's final chamber will open. The cave's leader is a pumped-up version of monsters that you've been fighting all along. After you score a few quick hits, step out of the way to avoid its attack. When it's low on energy, it will turn red and become a little more aggressive. Keep fighting.**

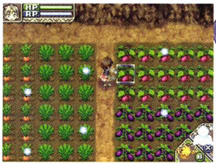


## Shopping Spree

Celebrate your victory in Carmite Cave by having Leo upgrade your hoe and sickle. Also, purchase the Teleport and Medication spells at the library, the Windsword at the festival on Day 23, and the shelf and table from Ivan.

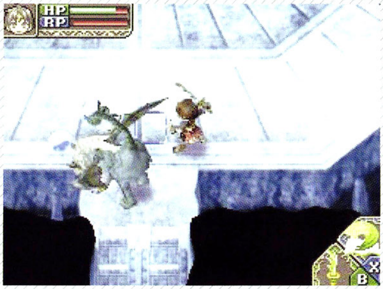
## Darker, Deeper

Your growing reputation as an adventurer will earn you a pass to Toros Cave. Talk to Mayor Godwin to receive an official document. Then buy Paragon and sweet potato seeds and make your way through Toros cave as you did Carmite Cave, using runes from crops to sustain RP and destroying all enemy-generating devices along the way.



## Back-End Deal

**The Chimera of Toros Cave is weak at the tail. Keep your distance while the creature is firing water projectiles, then come in with strong attacks on the monster's backside. Like the beast of Carmite, the Chimera will turn red when it is close to defeat and, more importantly, speed up its attacks. Be patient and keep hitting it from behind whenever possible.**

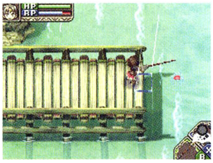


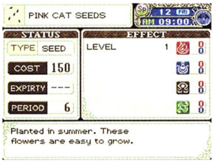
## Return to Toros

Following your fight at Toros Cave and some much needed rest, have Camus build a monster hut, then head back to Toros Cave and catch some of the cave's creatures by using your Friendship Glove. Among the beasts that you should tame is a Woolly—you could use the fur. Also take your axe to Leo for an upgrade. There are several holidays at the end of spring, so schedule your shopping around them.

## Prepare for Battle

Making money by farming, fishing, and selling items is important, because there are a lot of things that you need to purchase to be ready for cave exploration. Among them are the Cure spell, an iron shield, and Pink Cat Flower seeds. You should also spring for the Sealed, Paralysis, and Poison rings, and have your hammer upgraded. The next site to explore is Clemens Cave. When you speak to Mayor Godwin about getting a pass, he won't want to hand one over just yet. Go to the library and talk to Russel. He'll tell you that Cecilia is missing. When you take that information to Godwin, he'll grant you access to Clemens.





PINK CAT SEEDS

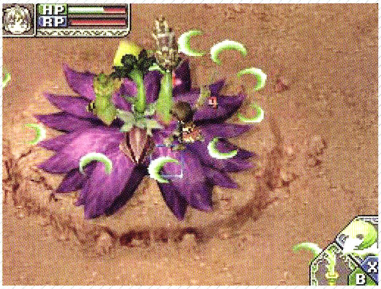
12 FRI
AM 09:00

| STATUS | | EFFECT | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| TYPE | SEED | LEVEL | 1 | 0 |
| COST | 150 | | | 0 |
| EXPIRTY | --- | | | 0 |
| PERIOD | 6 | | | 0 |

Planted in summer. These flowers are easy to grow.

## Enter the Rafflesia

**By defeating all of the enemy generators of Clemens Cave, you'll gain access to the Rafflesia's chamber. Though the creature does have high HP, it does not move, which gives you a distinct advantage. The huge plant will send out a creature to attack you periodically. Dispatch it, then keep chopping away at the foliage. The enemy's red state represents faster attacks, but still no real threat.**



## Summer of Love

What better way to usher in summer than to make friends with monsters? Have Camus build you a new monster hut, and go back to Clemens to form a friendly bond with its creatures, particularly an Ingis. Also, when Leo has your hammer ready, employ him to upgrade your watering can to silver. The better your watering can, the fewer refills it takes to water your crops. Your victory over Rafflesia will convince Godwin that you are ready for another challenge. Talk to him to get the pass to Mt. Gigant.

# SUMMER

**Plow under your radish crops and plant tomatoes, corn, and more warm-weather food: summer is here. Your growing status as a farmer and a warrior will afford you a better standing in the community, possibly earning you the attention of a lady or two. Home expansion will be important if you plan to find a bride.**

## Kiss the Cook

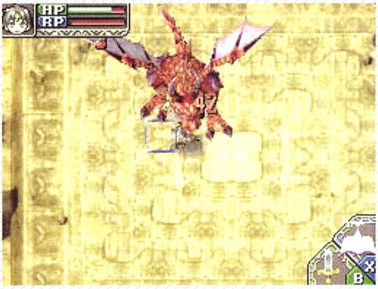
The first step toward making your bachelor pad into a more domesticated dwelling is to buy a kitchen. Day 1 of summer is a holiday. Take the opportunity to purchase a kitchen and a refrigerator from Ivan. Next, clear and till your fields and plant pineapples. The tropical fruit takes a long time to grow, but its high yield makes the extra care worthwhile. When your watering-can upgrade is complete, put Leo to work on your hoe. While you're at Leo's place, buy a long sword. Also, buy instant dishes from Russel and fill your sack with meals from your kitchen. When you're ready to go, head for Mt. Gigant.

## Bring Reinforcements

Like the other dungeons that you've conquered, Mt. Gigant needs some planting prep work. There are only two water sources in the dungeon, so your high-capacity watering can should come in handy. When you're ready to make a run at the dungeon, bring your Ingis to help with the battle.

## A Gigant-ic Beast

**The leader of Mt. Gigant is a scaly monster of large proportions: the Grimoire Dragon. The attack that it uses most often is a slow circle that ends with a strike. While the dragon is working its way around you, try to attack it from behind. If you stay close to the dragon, it will employ more fire attacks than clawing scratches. Keep your distance and move in only when you make a few strong swipes, then escape. The dragon's red state (on the brink of its defeat) adds another fire attack to its repertoire and more speed in general. Keep moving. If you stay in one place, you get hit multiple times before you can engineer an escape.**



## Catch and Employ

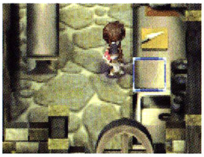
Once you're done with the dragon, Leo should have your upgraded hoe. Pick it up and drop off your sickle. Rest up, then return to Mt. Gigant to capture more monsters. Among the most useful creatures to have around the farm will be a Peekamoo, a Cockadoodle, and a Flower monster.

## Ground-Working Reward

Once you've tilled at least 12 three-by-three plots of land in Mt. Gigant, Godwin will decree that you are ready for the Misty Bloom Pass. The dungeon will not be accessible until winter, which gives you plenty of time to stockpile wood for a house expansion and a third monster hut. Once Leo hands over your upgraded sickle, get him to work on your axe then your hammer. Keep growing and selling items to make money, and work on your relationships with the Kardians.

## Summer Chefdom

With your downtime between dungeons, you'll be able to concentrate on increasing your cooking skills. See Ivan for a knife set, a frying pan, and a mixer, then go to the library and stock up on cookbooks (Chop-Shop Vol. 1, Chop-Shop Vol. 2, Blending In, *Side Dishes Vol. 1*, and *Side Dishes Vol. 2*). You've kept Leo busy with upgrades, and the trend should continue with your fishing rod.

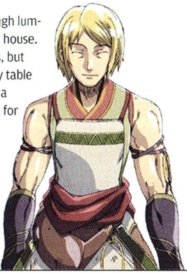


## Recycled Prize

On Day 26, the town celebrates the Treasure Hunt festival. The competition's prize is an empty bottle—not a great gift until you realize that it will increase your capacity for carrying recovery potions. Enter and win.

## Home Improvement

By the end of summer, you should have enough lumber and gold to get Neuman to upgrade your house. You'll be sleeping under the stars for 10 days, but once the work is done you'll have an alchemy table (giving you the ability to create potions) and a forge (no more relying on Leo to do the work for you). The additions will save you time and money, eventually.



# FALL

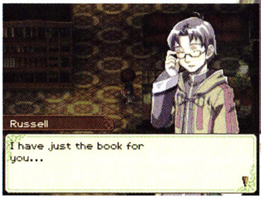
**As the leaves turn, the more-barren months begin. Hopefully summer was productive enough to sustain you through the bad weather and hard ground. You've got a full season ahead of you before you can move onto the next cave, so spend the time preparing for battle.**

## Out with the Old

The summer crops won't survive the changing seasons. Clear away the plants that brought you warm-weather success and put in new plants. None of the fall vegetables offer a particularly high yield, so the cheaper carrots and spinach plants (which you'll harvest in a few days) may be your best bets.

## Fall Reading

Now that you have an alchemy table and a forge, you should read up on the subjects. Go to the library and purchase the *Soulcraft* and *Accessories* series of books, along with copies of *Mixtures* and *Concoctions*. You should also see Ivan to purchase machines that will allow you to make your own ingredients.

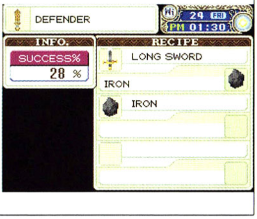


Russell

I have just the book for you...

## Heat Up the Forge

The weather may be getting colder, but your forge will be red-hot. Use the knowledge that you gathered from your books on operating a forge to make a Defender, a Chillproof bag, a round shield, and a Hero certificate. You'll use all of your handmade items when the fighting commences again in winter. Spend the rest of fall farming and building your relationships with the womenfolk. Purchasing more furniture from Ivan, such as the large shelf, table, and double bed, would also be a plus.



DEFENDER

24 FRI
PM 01:30

INFO.

SUCCESS%
28 %

RECIPE

LONG SWORD

IRON

IRON

# WINTER

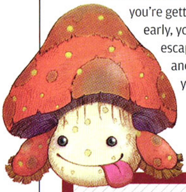
**With a chill in the air and access to Misty Bloom Cave, you'll experience a hard but productive winter. Do all you can to ready yourself for tough battles, and be patient. Several farming trips to the cave before you make the big assault on the enemies will give you runes that you can use to replenish your power in the middle of the battle.**

## Big Kitchen, Big Appetite

On the first day of winter, take advantage of the holiday to buy the large kitchen from Ivan. The refrigerator will hold more food and the large counter will give you room to stock up with new appliances later in the season.

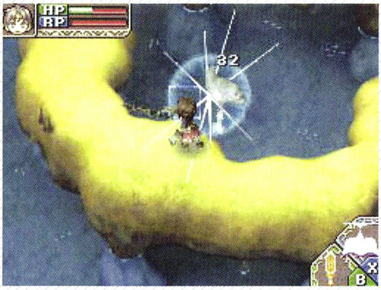
## Full Bloom

Don't let the small size of Misty Bloom Cave fool you. You'll have your biggest battles in its cozy confines. Before the final sweep of the cave, plant fall crops in the soil and let them grow. During the full-on fight, you'll appreciate the runes that come as dividends from plants that are ready to harvest. Be methodical about the fight. If you're getting beaten up early, you may want to escape and give it another go after you're rested.



## Silence the Siren

**The Siren of Misty Bloom Cave is invulnerable when she's in the water. The only option you have is to avoid her attacks and wait until she emerges on dry land. She is also able to recover some of her hit points, so even when you think the battle might be winding down, you'll have more fighting to do. Slash her with your strongest weapon and get out of the way when she looks like she's ready to attack. The frequency of her attacks and the likelihood that she will regenerate increase when her energy is low enough to make her turn red.**



## Creature Comforts

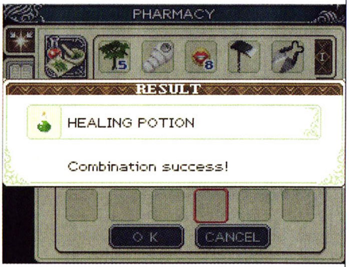
If you don't have at least three monster huts yet, get Camus to build you new housing for your growing beast collection. The Hitodama is among the monsters that you should befriend in Misty Bloom Cave and take back to your farm. Not only will it help you in your fight through Kasimir Ruins, but it will also water your fields for you. That's a major time-saver.

## Get Your Hands Dirty

The task that will enable you to enter Kasimir Ruins is the same as the job you accomplished to get the pass to Carmite Caves: till 100 squares of land. Once you've done the deed, talk to Godwin to collect the paperwork. The weapons that got you through Misty Bloom Cave are good enough to carry you through Kasimir, but it's never a bad idea to upgrade. You'll meet Sharron at the ruins entrance. She'll ask you not to enter, but a little persuasion will get her to let you pass, as long as you've befriended at least 10 monsters. Once inside, you'll have to plant crops to open a door. The cave's spring climate is perfect for fast-growing radishes.

## Mix It Up

In the days that it takes to grow the crops in front of the door, make 300-HP-restoring Healing potions by using the Recovery potion recipe and adding green grass (available in Clemens Cave and Mt. Gigant).



HEALING POTION

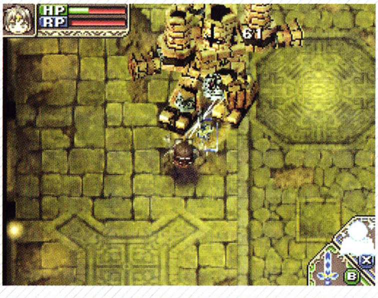
Combination success!

## The Mini-Golem Is Key

Once the crops mature in Kasimir Ruins, you'll be able to move on to the main dungeon. Keep fighting monsters and destroying generators until you come across another locked door. Since Sharron knows the ruins well, she can provide a little help in opening the door. When you talk to her, she'll deliver a cryptic speech about a missing key. Return to the door and enter a large empty room next to it. You'll encounter a Mini-Golem that will be easy for you to defeat given your advanced fighting abilities. Once the creature is gone, you'll have the key and a clear passage into the next section of the ruins.

## Happy Ending

**The Golem at the heart of Kasimir ruins would lose a battle to the Siren of Misty Bloom Cave. Since you've already taken care of the Siren, the Golem should be a pushover. Still, don't be too confident; watch its attack patterns, move out of the way, and counter when you have a clear shot. The creature will speed up in the late stages of the battle (when it turns red), but its attack patterns will stay the same.**



## Clean Up in Kasimir

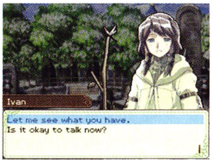
Though the monsters of Kasimir Ruins aren't particularly strong or helpful on the farm, you can add to your monster collection by taking another run through the ruins and making friends along the way.

## Farming Exposition

Even though you are a sword-swinging hero, the most important tools in your arsenal are your hoe and watering can. Godwin will give you the Danann Cave pass after you clear Kasimir Ruins, but you won't be able to enter the cave until you work the first fields that you come to on your way to the ruins to find a key, then nurture six groups of three-by-three-square plants to open the next locked door.

## Now You're Cooking

It'll take a few days for your farming project in Danann Cave to be complete. Spend the time learning the culinary arts. Buy the steamer, oven, and pot from Ivan, then purchase the *For Dinner* series of books, as well as *Bake Me Tender* and *Steam Cooking*. Defeating and taming monsters is good for the community, but its good to have another skill to fall back on. Before you leave for your fight in the cave, forge the Luck Blade. It's a good item to have while fighting the foes of Danann.

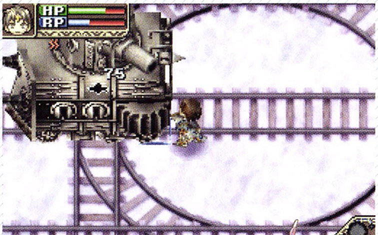


Ivan

Let me see what you have.
Is it okay to talk now?

## You versus a Tank

**The main thing to avoid while facing the Battle Tank of Danann Cave is getting run over. The tank follows two attack patterns in its normal state. Once you have those down, it'll be easy to stay out of its way and slash at it while it's going by. When the tank turns red, it will speed up and change its approaches. You'll have to think quickly to avoid it, but a few more hits will finish it off.**



## Bag a Wizard

There are a lot of great creatures in Danann Cave, but the type that will help you most in your journey through Greed Cave (for which you'll get the pass soon) is the Little Wizard. Find one on your next visit to Danann and add it to your collection.

## Get Greedy

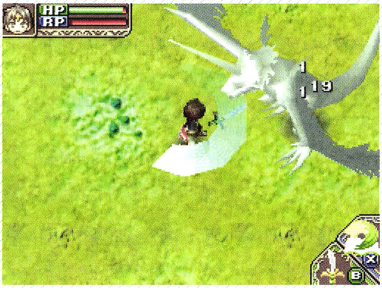
Godwin will give you the Greed Cave pass based on your heroics in Danann Cave. Before you take off for the cave, either accumulate all of the Paragon, Roundoff, and Antidote that you can get your hands on or forge the poison-protective Happy Ring. The ring takes some time and a number of steps to create. If you're eager to get off to the cave, you will want to buy the goods instead.

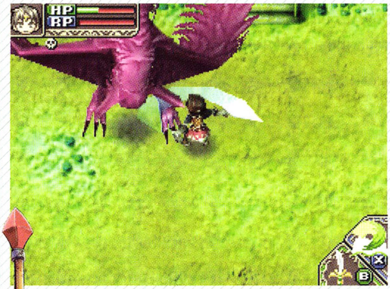
## Summer in Winter

Greed Cave has a summer climate, so the best crop to grow for runes is Pink Cat Flowers. They'll bloom quickly and give you the power you need to destroy all of the enemy generators.

## Ego Maniac

**The Grimoire monster at the end of Greed Cave is very powerful and has high HP. But it also has a big ego. Take a defensive position while the beast is attempting to attack you. When it stops to admire itself, counter with your own attacks. The creature's red state doesn't cause it to change its attack patterns, but it does make the monster speed up and spend less time preening. You'll have to be a little quicker to get your hits in.**





## A Turning Point

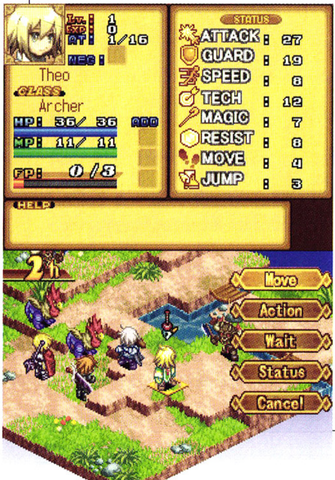
After you come back from Greed Cave and talk to Godwin then go with Ivan to the Sechs Empire border, the main adventure's story will come to a close and the credits will roll. However, the traditional Harvest Moon portion of the game will continue. Keep growing, forging relationships, and enjoying life on the farm.

# INTO THE LIGHT

## We sit down with the developers of Luminous Arc to find out what makes their new DS strategy-RPG shine.

By Steve Thomason

**Atlus has long been a strong supporter of the DS, but the publisher's latest offering might be its most compelling yet. A collaboration between Marvelous Interactive, rookie development studio imageepoch, and famed composer Yasunori Mitsuda (whose previous works include Chrono Trigger and Xenosaga), Luminous Arc combines good old-fashioned turn-based strategy with an appealing cast of characters and first-rate production values. We recently spoke with the responsible parties for some insight into the game's development. And for more on what we thought of Luminous Arc (hint: we liked it), check out our review on page 86.**



Lv. 1
EXP 0
AT 1/16
NEG
Theo
CLASS Archer
HP 36/ 36
MP 11/ 11
FP 0 /3
ADD

STATUS
ATTACK : 27
GUARD : 19
SPEED : 8
TECH : 12
MAGIC : 7
RESIST : 8
MOVE : 4
JUMP : 3

### Producer Hideyuki Mizutani (Marvelous Interactive)

**Nintendo Power:** How did this collaboration come about?

**HM:** The project started when the director, Mr. Mikage, and I both had the idea of creating a strategy-RPG with the same direction at around the same time. We both wanted to create a full-scale strategy role-playing game based on a modern handheld system. Now that we have Wi-Fi capability, we thought that the real fun factor of tactical combat can be picked up and enjoyed by many people, resulting in a greater enjoyment of the game. We then shared this idea with other creators, such as character designer Kaito Shibano and sound producer Yasunori Mitsuda, and they agreed to join the project.

**NP:** The story in Luminous Arc poses some pretty serious questions about faith and religion. Can you talk a bit about why you wanted to tackle those particular themes?

**HM:** As a person goes through life, I think that one grows up with the concept of "belief." What one believes in may change as they get older, but they might also discover a new way of looking at things. In Luminous Arc, one of these themes is how a boy matures after the initial "boy meets girl." The RPG style of this game encompasses a system of growth by gaining levels of experience through an adventurous story. We wanted to show how the plot development combines with character development to make a game.

**NP:** Similarly, the line between good and evil seems to be somewhat blurred. Why was that important to you from a narrative standpoint?

**HM:** How one faces and decides between good and evil is the real truth for any person. It isn't that we blurred good and evil in Luminous Arc, but the emphasis is on how one can grow from stopping to think about what good and evil really are, and how one's future opens up with those thoughts in mind.

**NP:** Is the story inspired at all by the real-life historical witch hunts?

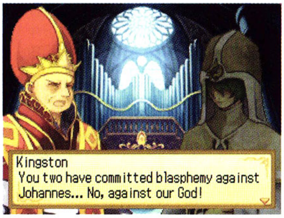
**HM:** I know of the historical events, but we weren't directly influenced too much by them. For the basis of our RPG, we wanted to create a worldview centered around swords and magic. Swords, magic, then what? That's when the idea of witches first popped into my head. Why are witches so feared? Why are people afraid of other people? When these questions came to mind, I felt the characters in this story come to life. I wanted to make Luminous Arc a story about people dealing with other people, and I felt that this theme about witches really ties into the images of both opposition and reconciliation.

**NP:** Why did you choose to make the protagonists children?

**HM:** I believe that growth is the act of changing oneself through discovery. So, I entrusted the story, and the future, to the boys and girls who can see and question everything with fresh minds.

**NP:** Who's your favorite character from the game, and why?

**HM:** As a developer, I'm inclined to say "everyone," but if I had to choose a favorite character it would either be Mel or Cecille. Mel is the type of character who knows everything and will support everyone with a positive position, no matter what obstacles they face. Cecille is also a character who has a strong will and supports the story from the shadows. I tend to favor supporting actors in movies, so I also like characters who support the main character from behind the scenes.



Kingston
You two have committed blasphemy against Johannes... No, against our God!

**NP:** Why did you decide to make the game exclusively for DS?

**HM:** We saw the potential of creating a new way of enjoying strategy-RPGs on a handheld console. The genre is originally based on board games, and the availability of Wi-Fi features was extremely attractive to us. Everyone who enjoys this type of game can play against each other without worrying about age or the communication medium. Also, the fact that handhelds can be picked up as easily as a book fits perfectly with games that require strategic thinking. The new gaming environment has created a new variety of entertainment.

**NP:** The game features a lot of voice work for a DS title. How did you manage to cram all of that in there, and was that something that was important to you?

**HM:** When a user plays a game, what draws them into the game world? I believe that sound is what sets the scale and the quality of the worldview. By maximizing the overall effect of using character voices in dialogues and battles along with the music, we thought that we could form a stronger feel and attachment to each character, rather than appearing just as units on the battlefield. For SRPGs, having an emotional attachment to each individual unit creates drama in the battles, with a unique experience for each individual player. That drama itself is the most enjoyable story you can experience.

**NP:** Between the Synergy attacks and the Intermission scenes, there seems to be a strong friendship component. Why was that something that you wanted to stress?

**HM:** Communication is a very important concept. By viewing and sharing similarities, I believe the world can be filled with understanding and love.

### Director Ryoei Mikage (imageepoch)

**NP:** We understand that imageepoch is a new studio. Can you tell us how many members are on the team and what they have worked on previously?

**RM:** As of June 2007, we currently have 105 staff members on board. In the past, I've worked on titles such as the Tales series, the Wild Arms series, and the Grandia series. There are many other team members who share similar kinds of experience.

**NP:** We hear that you're a big fan of strategy-RPGs. Is this your first chance to work on one, and what do you hope to bring to the genre with Luminous Arc?

**RM:** This is my first project as a creator. I've put a lot of work into emphasizing and giving depth to both the characters and the gameplay. This game was designed to be a series from the get-go, with the first game concentrating on the characters, then strengthening the game systems in the second and third titles.

**NP:** What are some of your personal favorite strategy-RPGs, and what is it about the genre that appeals to you?

**RM:** I'm a big fan of Tactics Ogre and Final Fantasy Tactics. The point that stands out is that the strategic elements are intricately detailed throughout the entire scenario.

### Character Designer Kaito Shibano

**NP:** We're told this is your first work on a video game. What have you worked on previously?

**KS:** Before I received the offer to work on Luminous Arc, I worked on visuals for Japanese PC games and illustrations for trading card games.

**NP:** What's your process for designing the characters? How much do you know about each one beforehand? Or do your designs end up informing the character's personality at all?

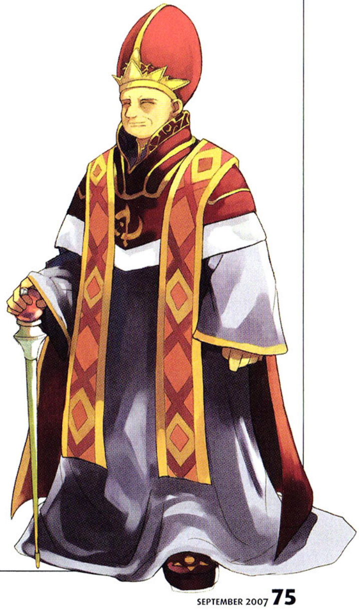
**KS:** I pay particular attention to the characters' occupations, so that you can easily tell what each character does. Using the initial character descriptions made by internal staff, for instance, Cecille was a "Priestess" and Saki was "Ninja," I wrote and rewrote the characters from these simple depictions while discussing their personalities in detail with the producer, Mizutani, at the same time. In that sense, there aren't any characters that drastically changed their personalities from their original ideas.

**NP:** How did you approach the designs for each of the different groups in the game: the Garden Children, the Witches, and the members of the Church?

**KS:** First, about the Witch designs: we decided to make their outfit colors correspond to the different magic elements they represent, such as Vanessa's "passionate red" (she is the Witch of Immolation). For Heath, I didn't want to make him just an ordinary knight, so his spear is loosely based on a Buddhist ritual instrument called a shakujo (a staff reinforced with steel rings) to give it flavor. There weren't any restrictions for the Garden Children, so I was free to design them as I pleased.

**NP:** Was there a particular historical or cultural feel you were trying to capture with the designs?

**KS:** Witches are generally viewed with dark imagery, like being in dark rooms watching over a magic cauldron. I intentionally went for an opposite, lighter feel to brush off that stereotype.

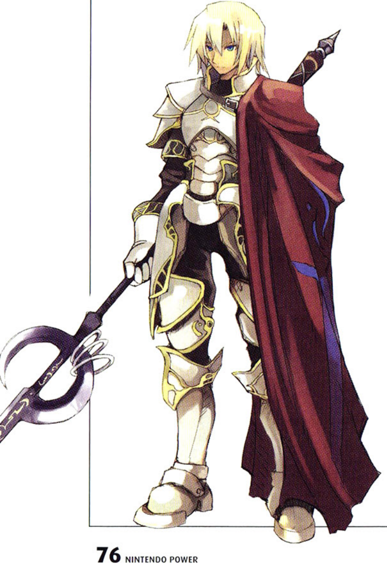


7th
Attack
Skill
Flash D
Synergy
Item
Cancel
START
SYSTEM
13 15

**NP:** As an artist, what inspires and influences you?
**KS:** For character costume designs, I admire Akihiko Yoshida's work on Tactics Ogre and Final Fantasy XII. Other than that, I like movies from director Tim Burton, but that's not related to games.

### Sound Producer Yasunori Mitsuda

**NP:** Can you talk a bit about the process for composing a video game soundtrack? Do you get game footage or builds of the game, and then compose pieces for particular segments after you see them?
**YM:** Game music usually can't wait for the other sections (graphics, programming, etc.) to be completed before composing starts, so there are a lot of things that are difficult to deal with. But we try to get as many details about the game as possible. Of course, if there are any scenes that have already been created, we will match the music to it. For scenes that are still in the making, I use my imagination to think about how the scene should be in order to start composing. There is a 5% chance of a mismatch, though. [laughs]



**NP:** When working on the music for a handheld game, do you have to alter your approach?
**YM:** Yes, there are pretty tight limitations involved, especially on the Nintendo DS. The sound quality really starts to have an effect on how you write a piece, so a lot of care must be put into the composition.

**NP:** What's it been like collaborating with the other composers on the title, and how has that changed the process for you?
**YM:** I had more duties as the sound producer for this project, so while I was coordinating the sound directions of the four composers, I produced it in such a way to showcase the various styles of each composer's music. I myself had it easy, since I was able to compose while listening to the other composers' tunes! [laughs]

**NP:** As a musician, what inspires and influences you?
**YM:** I get influenced by everything [laughs], so I draw inspiration from many things. From music CDs, artwork, novels, concerts . . . Sometimes I even get hints from chatting about random things with my friends. What I think is important is that you constantly convert things around you into "music."

**NP:** What do you think is the most important thing about a video game soundtrack? What does it need to bring to the overall experience?
**YM:** A lot of times, game music must convey many different feelings in a single track (for instance, if a track's theme is "sorrow," there are varying levels of sadness depending on the situation the music is played in). We have to write it in a way that will convey these different feelings each time you hear it. That way, the listener won't be bored when they play the game, and each scene can become a memorable moment.

**NP:** What's the overarching feeling or mood that you've tried to capture for the Luminous Arc soundtrack? Were there particular aspects of the game that you tried to accentuate with the music?
**YM:** A wide variety of characters appear in Luminous Arc, each with their own backstories and human drama, so we emphasized this in the music by composing focused themes for each of the characters. The music for the battles is matched with the stage setting as well as the situation in the plotline, so we'd definitely like you to listen to this in the music.

LV. 52
EXP 40
AT 1/16
NEG
Alph
CLASS
Rym Hero
HP 655/655
MP 157/157
FP 0/3
STATUS
ATTACK 266
GUARD 228
SPEED 98
TECH 123
MAGIC 78
RESIST 122
MOVE 4
JUMP 3
HELP
ADD
Cancel
8th
12 07

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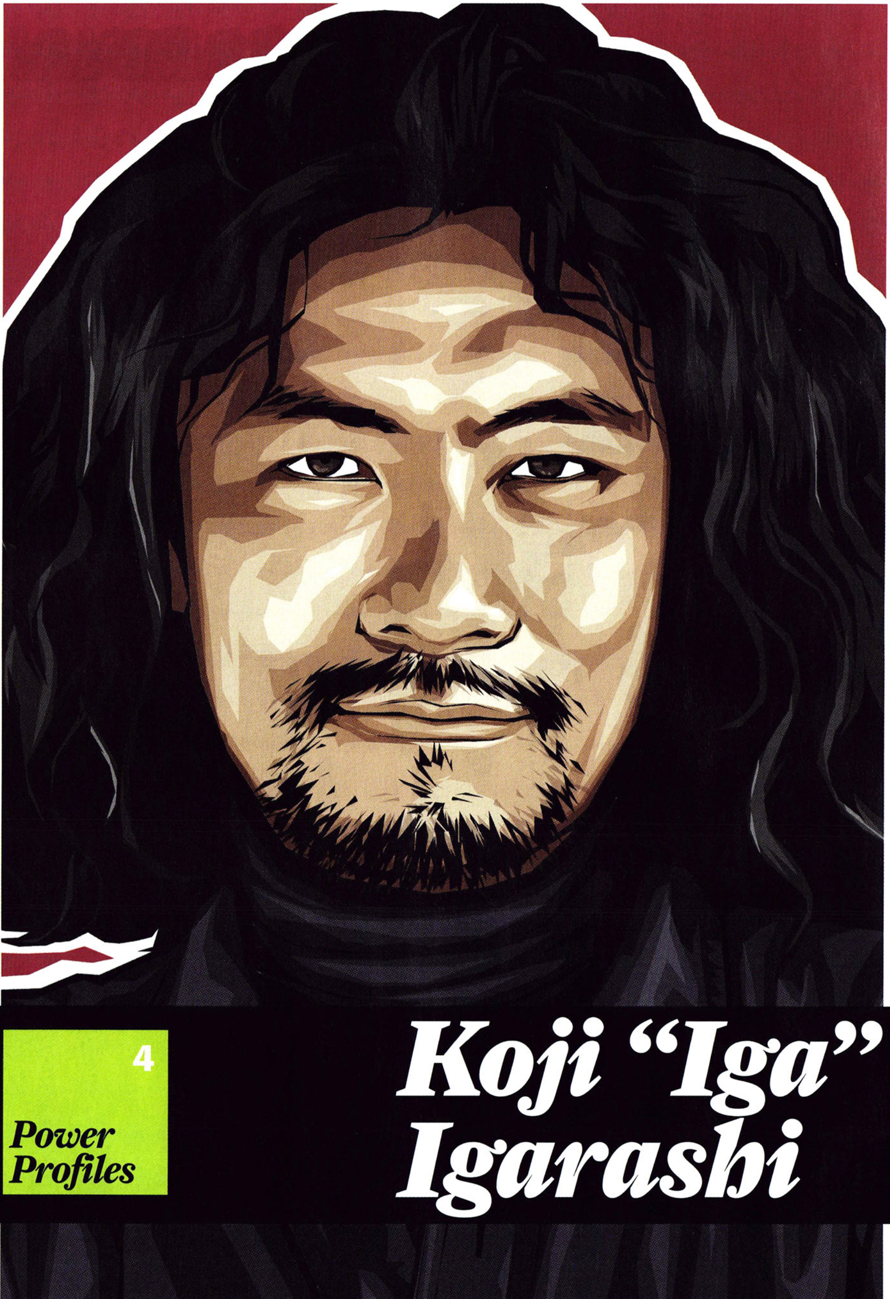


4

Power Profiles

# Koji "Iga" Igarashi

Ask longtime gamers what their favorite third-party franchises are, and you'll often hear Castlevania. Konami's vampire-slaying series has enthralled players for more than 20 years with its whip-snapping action, and the man responsible for the games' consistent quality is the series' surrogate father, producer Koji "Iga" Igarashi.

Iga wasn't involved with the creation of the Castlevania series, but his name's been synonymous with the franchise ever since he came onboard for 1997's highly acclaimed Castlevania: Symphony of the Night on PlayStation. Symphony was noteworthy not only for adding Metroidlike exploration to Castlevania's Gothic action formula, but also for staying true to the series' 2-D roots at a time when 3-D was becoming the standard. Iga maintained these precepts as he took on the mantle of producer and returned to Castlevania's rich universe with games like Castlevania: Aria of Sorrow on GBA and Castlevania: Portrait of Ruin on DS. In addition to driving one of the most beloved, long-running franchises in gaming, Iga is known for his continued passion for 2-D gameplay (he spoke on the subject at this year's Game Developers Conference) and his legendary fashion sense, which have contributed to making him one of the most prominent, recognizable, and appreciated game creators in the industry today.

**DATE OF BIRTH:**
March 17, 1968

**BIRTHPLACE:**
Aizu-Wakamatsu City, Fukushima prefecture, Japan

**POSITION:**
Producer at Konami Digital Entertainment

**BEST KNOWN FOR:**
Producing and guiding the Castlevania series; his beard

**FAVORITE FOOD:**
Blood . . . no, sushi

**CURRENT PROJECTS:**
Castlevania: The Dracula X Chronicles (PSP) and other (secret) projects

**Nintendo Power: Can you tell us how you got into the video game business?**

***Koji Igarashi:*** I have a bit of a story for this. When I was still a student at the university I received a job offer, but I declined the opportunity for various reasons. After that happened, I found myself thinking, "What am I going to do?" But then I got my foot in the door at Konami thanks to a recommendation from my *senpai* [upper classman], who joined Konami about a year before I did. Hmm; maybe I shouldn't admit that. I'm sure I was hired at Konami through an act of divine intervention!

**NP: When you were a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up?**

***Iga:*** I was very creative. When I was in elementary school I wanted to be a carpenter.

**NP: You've said that you were originally into the PC more than console games. What made you into a console-game fan?**

***Iga:*** I preferred the PC because I enjoyed creating programs for myself, and I could create anything I wanted. However, I couldn't reproduce games that were as fun as what I played in the arcade using a PC, because of the limitations of the PC's technical specs. I felt irritated about that. Then I played Super Mario Bros., and I started thinking that games should be played on a dedicated game machine. That was how I changed my mind.

**NP: What were your thoughts when you first played Castlevania? What's the moment that turned you into a Castlevania fan, and did you ever think you'd be working on the series?**

***Iga:*** When I played this game for the first time, I just thought that it was such a challenging game! I remember that was the moment I discovered that I may not be very good at playing action games. However, I really liked the Castlevania game world, so every time a new Castlevania game was released I played it (at my friend's house). The very moment that I realized that I was a fan of Castlevania was just after I started at Konami and gave Super Castlevania IV for SNES a play test. Of course, I never expected that I'd be working on the Castlevania series.

**NP: How did your pre-Castlevania game-creation experience prepare you for working on the Castlevania franchise? How did you transition from your early days as a game maker to becoming the lord of the Castlevania series?**

***Iga:*** Before Castlevania, I worked on a lot of games that were ported from high-spec [arcade] machines to consoles, which are low-spec. I think my technique for creating games has been forged considerably from this experience. Moreover, I think that I acquired the patience to see things through, without leaving them until the last minute, through the experience of creating the original Tokimeki Memorial [a dating game for PC Engine Super CD]. After I finished creating Castlevania: Symphony of the Night, the Castlevania franchise moved to another development studio, but I remember constantly urging everyone I worked with, including my supervisor, to develop a new Castlevania. I feel that my taking action and setting my sights on that goal helped create Castlevania as we know it today. I think taking that responsibility also helped me improve as a developer.

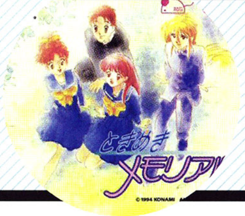
> ***"Then I played Super Mario Bros., and I started thinking that games should be played on a dedicated game machine."***

**GAMEOGRAPHY**

Iga is best known for Castlevania (including several titles we don't have space to list here), but not all his games involve haunted castles and slaying vampires.

**DETANA!! TWINBEE**
1992, PC ENGINE
PROGRAMMER

**TOKIMEKI MEMORIAL**
1994, PC ENGINE SUPER CD
PROGRAMMER/SCRIPT WRITER


ときめき
メモリアル
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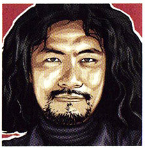
**CASTLEVANIA: SYMPHONY OF THE NIGHT**
1997, PLAYSTATION
SCENARIO WRITER/PROGRAMMER
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR



> *"… I would like people to remember the games that I worked on. That would be a great honor for me. I hope the game franchises I've worked on will continue on 50 years from now."*

**NP: What were you up to in the years between Symphony of the Night and Harmony of Dissonance?**

*Iga:* I was working on a Japan-exclusive role-playing game called Elder Gate [for PlayStation]. (It does not have a good reputation, though. . . .) I was also working on out-sourcing games. Actually, I had a different title—senior manager—at that time. Castlevania Chronicles [the PlayStation re-release of a game for the X68000 system] is a game from those days.

**NP: Why do you find 2-D games so appealing?**

*Iga:* Generally, because it's easy to understand how to play games in 2-D. I feel that 3-D games need specific directions or special effects to become a game you can really play. In my case, I don't mind 2-D even though the graphics are just text libraries from a game-origin standpoint. I find 2-D games appealing because I can just concentrate on playing. But I think 3-D games are also appealing because I like the movielike presentation. I feel that playing 3-D games is more like becoming a part of the game as opposed to 2-D games.

**NP: Where did you acquire your famous fashion sense? Were you always into wearing black, or did that happen after you became involved with Castlevania?**

*Iga:* Honestly, I do not have a good fashion sense. But those around me always poke fun at me, saying, "You're going to be in front of the press!" Well, they suggest nice clothes for me. But at any rate, I've preferred wearing black clothing for a long time. Yes, I think I've come to wear black more since I started working on Castlevania.

**NP: Who wins in a knock-down, drag-out fight: Simon, Trevor, Soma, or Alucard?**

*Iga:* Ummmm . . . this is the most difficult question! If each character were battling against vampires, Simon or Trevor would be the strongest. In the case of fighting demons, I think the strongest should be Soma, who has the power of controlling souls. And I cannot dismiss Alucard, who has the advantages of both demons and humans. Well, I don't know if I can find an answer to this question, but it may be fun if we made them fight each other.

**NP: What aspect of creating a game do you enjoy most?**

*Iga:* I enjoy making the project and being lost in the fantasies the most.

**NP: When you're stumped by a difficult problem while creating a game, what's your process for working through it?**

*Iga:* When I encounter technical problems, I analyze my current situation so that the problem will become concrete. Then I make "to do" lists for each problem. I take the schedule into consideration and prioritize what I need to do. I also examine which game functions are indispensable. Depending on the result, I'll decide to change the project or increase personnel.

When I encounter an idea-related problem, well, that is no easy matter. First, I drive myself into a status of brainstorming all the time. While I'm still in that state, I do some activity that refreshes my mind, such as watching movies, listening to music, etc. I often hit upon a wonderful idea when I'm about to take a bath or when I'm waiting for a train. But I don't think brainstorming is worth doing for a long time or it becomes inefficient, so I always set a certain time limit for this.

**NP: What would you like to be remembered for 50 years from now?**

*Iga:* It doesn't really matter if people remember the things I've done, but I would like people to remember the games that I worked on. That would be a great honor for me. I hope the game franchises I've worked on will continue on 50 years from now. That would be wonderful.

**NP: Whose works in other forms of media, such as film or literature, do you most admire or enjoy?**

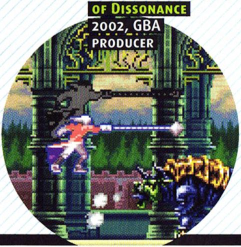
*Iga:* When I was at the university, my *senpai* showed me Monty Python. It was a huge culture shock for me. The impact still remains in my mind, and I am still impressed by them even now. Also, around the same time, I watched the works of Akira Kurosawa all over again. Those made a deep impression on me as well.

**NP: What is your favorite non-gaming hobby or pastime?**

*Iga:* My hobbies are sort of cyclical. For now, I'm enjoying watching movies or DVDs most. My son is old enough that he can watch movies now, too, so I often go to the theater with him.

**NP: If you could have one superpower, what would it be and why?**

*Iga:* I would choose mind reading. If I had this ability, I could give fantastic presentations to my supervisors. It's a restrained ability, but it's so capable, and that is why it's so cool. Although, I guess there could be one problem—you may come to hate people if you know what they're really thinking.



**CASTLEVANIA: HARMONY OF DISSONANCE**
2002, GBA
PRODUCER

**NANO BREAKER**
2005, PS2
PRODUCER

**CASTLEVANIA: DAWN OF SORROW**
2005, DS
PRODUCER

**CASTLEVANIA: PORTRAIT OF RUIN**
2006, DS
PRODUCER

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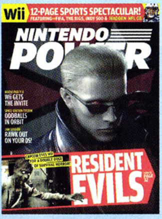
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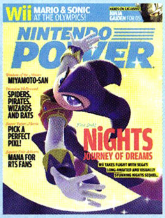
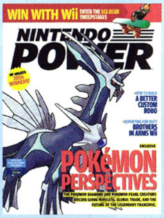
RESIDENT EVILS

**JULY 2007, VOLUME 217**
Evil to the Core (Resident Evil: Umbrella Chronicles, Resident Evil 4: Wii Edition), Wii Brought the Party (Mario Party 8), Wii Sports Preview (Madden NFL 08, Mario Strikers Charged, The Bigs, Legends of the Indy 500, FIFA Soccer 08), Treasure Trove (Project Treasure Island Z), Heavy Metal (Transformers), Pokémon Triple Feature (Pokémon Battle Revolution, Pokémon Diamond and Pearl, A Trainer's History), Space Oddity (Space Station Tycoon), Power Profile Interview (Koji Kondo), No Strings Attached (Jam Sessions), Hungry for Heroes (Goichi Suda interview), Dewy's Adventure, Mega Man Star Force, Looney Tunes: ACME Arsenal, Dynasty Warriors DS: Fighter's Battle, Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix, Hoshigami Remix: Ruining Blue Earth, Fullmetal Alchemist Trading Card Game, Scarface: The World is Yours, Counter Force.


Wii MARIO & SONIC AT THE OLYMPICS!
NINTENDO POWER
NiGHTS
JOURNEY OF DREAMS

**JUNE 2007, VOLUME 216**
Smash Files (Super Smash Bros. Brawl, Samus Aran: Zero Suit), Dreams Come True (Sega NiGHTS), Think Outside of the Box Office (Blockbuster Movie Titles), Sinnoh Suprises (Pokémon Diamond and Pokémon Pearl), Way Out There (Space Station Tycoon), Pump Up Your Pixls (Super Paper Mario), A Developing Revolution (The State of Nintendo: Wii Developers), Ready for War (Heroes of Mana), Enter the Ninja (Ninja Gaiden: Dragon Sword), Power Profile Interview (Shigeru Miyamoto), Geek Chic (Licensed products), Against the Grain (Rune Factory: A Harvest Moon Fantasy), Super Mario galaxy, Fire Emblem, The Legend of Zelda: Phantom Hourglass, Mario Strikers Charged, Pokémon Battle Revolution, Big Brain Academy, Cookie and Cream, Etrian Odyssey, Worms: Open Warfare 2, SimCity DS, Brothers in Arms DS, Impossible Mission DS, Mortal Kombat: Armageddon.


WIN WITH Wii
NINTENDO POWER
POKéMON PERSPECTIVES

**MAY 2007, VOLUME 215**
Smash Files (Super Smash Bros. Brawl, Samus Aran: Power Suit), Pearls of Wisdom (Pokémon Diamond and Pokémon Pearl), Untamed, Unmatched, Unbreakable, Unbelievable, Unescapable, Unleashed (Godzilla Unleashed), War Stories (Brothers in Arms: Double Time), Dew Process (Dewy's Adventure), 2006 Nintendo Power Awards Winners, Build a Better Robot (Custom Robo Arena), Now You're Cooking With Power (Cooking Games), Super Paper Mario: The Interview, Comeback Kid (Kid Icarus), A Legend in its Own Time (The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time), Naruto: Ninja Council, Death, Jr. and the Science Fair of Doom, Medal of Honor: Vanguard, Time Ace, Touch the Dead, Spider-Man 3, Diner Dash, Code Lyoko.

Wii PREVIEWS
NINTENDO POWER
Wii THE SIMS

**APRIL 2007, VOLUME 214**
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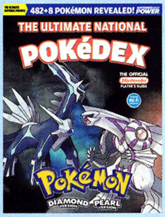
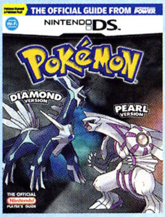
## OFFICIAL NINTENDO PLAYER'S GUIDES

THE OFFICIAL GUIDE FROM NINTENDO POWER
Wii
Pokémon Battle Revolution

POKéMON BATTLE REVOLUTION


482+8 POKéMON REVEALED!
THE ULTIMATE NATIONAL POKéDEX
Pokémon DIAMOND PEARL

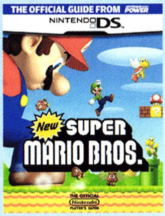
THE ULTIMATE NATIONAL POKéDEX


THE OFFICIAL GUIDE FROM NINTENDO POWER
NINTENDO DS
Pokémon
DIAMOND VERSION
PEARL VERSION

POKéMON DIAMOND AND POKéMON PEARL

THE OFFICIAL GUIDE FROM NINTENDO POWER
Wii
SUPER PAPER MARIO

SUPER PAPER MARIO


THE OFFICIAL GUIDE FROM NINTENDO POWER
NINTENDO DS
New SUPER MARIO BROS.

NEW SUPER MARIO BROS.

### Wii

- THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: TWILIGHT PRINCESS

### NINTENDO DS

- ANIMAL CROSSING: WILD WORLD
- PUPS: THE OFFICIAL NINTENDOGS COMPANION
- FINAL FANTASY IV ADVANCE
- MARIO & LUIGI: PARTNERS IN TIME
- METROID PRIME HUNTERS
- POKéMON RANGER
- POKéMON MYSTERY DUNGEON: BLUE/RED RESCUE TEAM
- YOSHI'S ISLAND DS

### GAME BOY ADVANCE

- POKéMON EMERALD (GBA)

### NINTENDO GAMECUBE

- POKéMON XD: GALE OF DARKNESS

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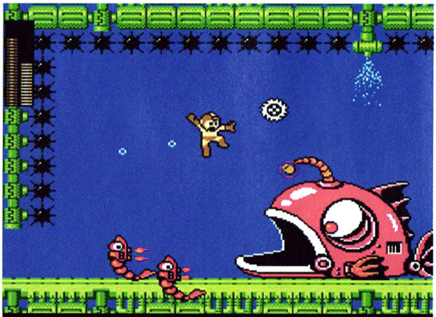
I want YOU . . . to stroke my 'stache!

# MEGA MAN 2

CAPCOM
MEGA MAN 2

It's the year 200X. Do you know where your robots are?



If Mega Man 2 taught gamers anything, it's that playing with saw blades is perfectly safe. Especially when you're throwing them at giant fish.

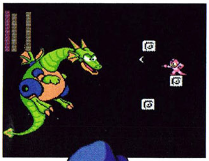
Platform: **NES**
Developer: **Capcom**
Publisher: **Capcom**
Release Date: **June 1989**
Covered in Issues: **6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 97**
Maximum Metal Blade Capacity: **112**

**With more than 50** games under his belt, Mega Man is one of the most prolific heroes in gaming history. He boasts numerous series across several generations of hardware, encompassing nearly every game genre; it seems that you can't go more than a few months before encountering another sequel. Yet few of them can compare to 1989's Mega Man 2—arguably the greatest Mega Man game of all.

According to Mega Man creator Keiji Inafune, Mega Man 2's development was something of a rogue effort. Although the first Mega Man, released in 1987, met with modest success, it wasn't a big enough hit to warrant an immediate sequel. Nonetheless, the Mega Man creators invested their own free time to work on the project, and Mega Man 2 was born, improving upon the original in almost every way: more levels, more weapons, better graphics, new abilities, and one of the best soundtracks of the 8-bit era.

Like its predecessor, Mega Man 2 combined anime style with solid shooting/platforming action and a compelling gameplay mechanic—acquiring new weapons by defeating Dr. Wily's robot bosses (which you could battle in whatever order you wanted), then using each new weapon to exploit another boss's weakness. In particular, the Metal Blade (acquired from Metalman) is one of the most useful weapons in the entirety of Mega Man lore—it's not only powerful, but you can fire it in eight directions with minimal energy consumption. In addition to gaining new weapons, Mega Man would acquire special items after beating some bosses. Essentially the precursor to the Rush abilities introduced in Mega Man 3, the items (creatively named Item-1, Item-2, and Item-3) allowed Mega Man to create various types of footholds to help him survive the game's toughest areas.

After destroying the eight bosses, Mega Man got to take the fight to Dr. Wily's multistage castle, which housed some of the largest, most impressive bosses the NES had seen. At the end, of course, was Dr. Wily himself; his final battle against Mega Man provided one of the most memorable moments in gaming as the mad scientist seemingly transformed and revealed his true form as an alien. As explained by Inafune, Mega Man 2's success cemented the series as a bona fide hit and set the stage for the Blue Bomber's impressive longevity. And with good reason: games rarely get better than Mega Man 2. —**Chris H.**

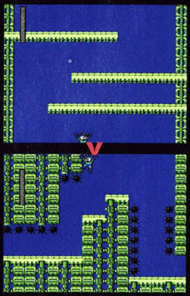


He's blue (da ba dee da ba die).

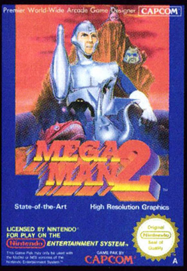
**Have a favorite classic game you'd like to see revisited?**
Send us your requests—we'll consider them for a future installment of Playback.
**pulse@nintendopower.com**

### MEGA MINUTIAE

**Mega Man 2 boasts great gameplay, but it's also got some unusual skeletons in its closet.**



**Case in point: a glitch that lets players bypass most of Bubbleman's stage. As Mega Man is dropping into the second horizontal section of the stage, you can push to the right and repeatedly pause the game to make Mega Man land on the ceiling of the area below. If you then tap the jump and shoot buttons rapidly and attempt to move left, there's a chance that you'll warp through most of the level and avoid many of the stage's mine hazards.**

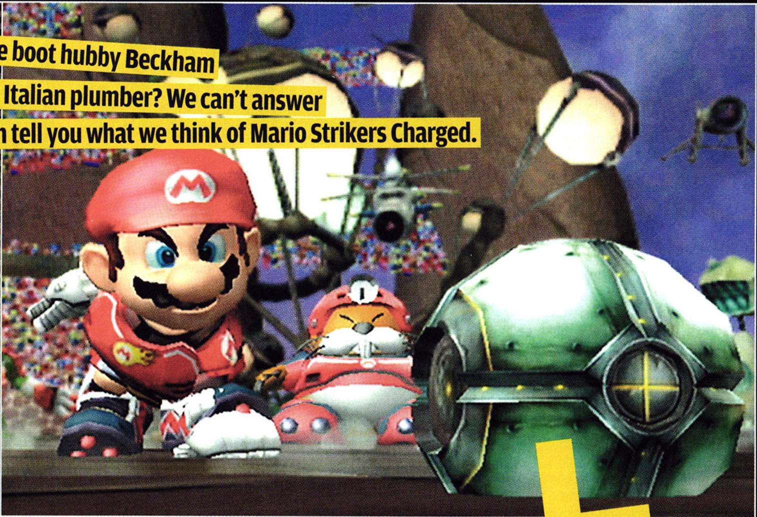

Premier World-Wide Arcade Game Designer CAPCOM
MEGA MAN 2
State-of-the-Art
High Resolution Graphics
LICENSED BY NINTENDO FOR PLAY ON THE Nintendo ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM
CAPCOM

**Even more bizarre is the game's European box art—its version of Mega Man resembled the Tin Man from *The Wizard of Oz*. Just what was Capcom thinking?**

# REVIEWS

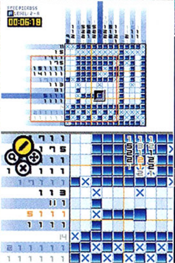
In-depth reviews of all the latest games.

**Will Posh Spice boot hubby Beckham for a fat Italian plumber? We can't answer that, but we can tell you what we think of Mario Strikers Charged.**

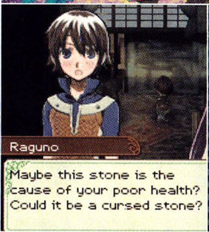


**Heroes of Mana, Luminous Arc, Pet Alien, and more.**

**85**
To protect or to destroy . . . apparently that's the question if you're a robotic, alien, earth-crashing freak.



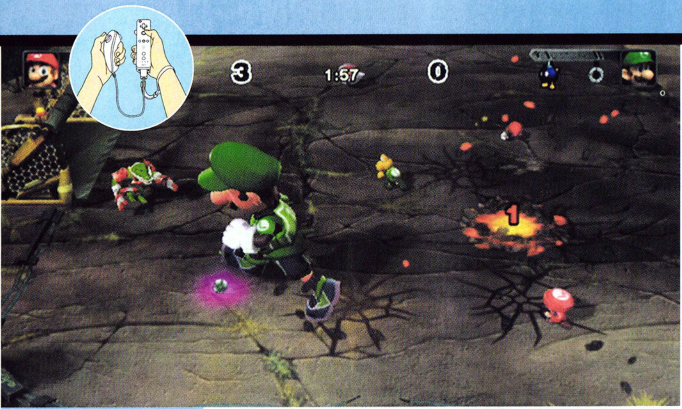
**85**
Trust us; this really is the Mona Lisa.



Raguno

Maybe this stone is the cause of your poor health? Could it be a cursed stone?

**88**
Marriage and monsters down on the farm . . . sounds like reality TV.



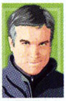
R U READY 4 SOME FUTBOL?

# HOW MARIO GETS HIS KICKS

## MARIO STRIKERS CHARGED

**RATING: 8.5**

PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
DEVELOPER: **NEXT LEVEL GAMES**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**

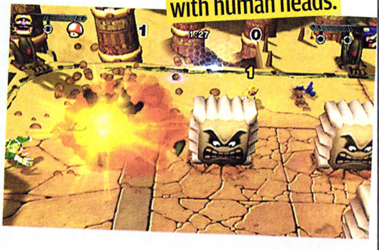


**Mario Strikers Charged isn't** really a soccer game—or even a sports game. It's more like a vehicular combat game without the vehicles. The goals at either end of the pitch—and the Kritters who defend them—are simply the most important enemies on a field full of enemies—you just happen to attack them with a ball (or glowing, ball-like metal orb, as the case may be). So if you're looking for a soccer game, seek out something with "FIFA" or "Winning Eleven" in the title. If you're looking for a game that's vaguely soccer-themed and a lot of fun, then strap on your body armor and head for the Mushroom Kingdom.

If you've played Super Mario Strikers on GameCube, then virtually nothing about Charged should surprise you: teams of four Mario-universe characters (plus CPU-controlled goal keepers) square off on a variety of fantasy soccer fields. Power-ups and obstacles abound and cheap shots are not just allowed, but required to win. The Super Strike from the original game has been replaced by the Mega Strike—a shot that can potentially unleash six balls at once. A Mega Strike cues a minigame that requires your opponent to swat the shots away by using the Wii remote like a light gun. If your timing is good when you unleash the shot—you need to stop a fast-moving power meter—then your shots will be very difficult to stop and you'll rack up plenty of goals. The Mega Strikes are cool, but they don't represent much of a shift in the basic game mechanics of SMS. Charged lifts itself over its predecessor by sharpening the controls, improving the graphics, and—most importantly—ratcheting up the game's speed. Passing and shooting are lightning-fast, and ball possession can change in the blink of an eye. Defensive moves—maybe "mugging" is a more appropriate term—are accomplished by a quick snap of the Wii remote. Because it's so easy to drive opponents into the turf, you'll find yourself doing it constantly. It's almost as much fun to clothesline opponents as it is to score goals. And it's even more fun to clothesline people you don't know—anonymously, over the Internet.

Pokémon Battle Revolution beat Charged to market as the first online Wii game, but it's fair to say that Poké Balls have nothing on Mario's glowing orbs when it comes to intense online action. You can establish a Friends Roster if you want to keep your crude humor and mild cartoon violence within your small circle, but the real selling point of Charged is the ability to jump online any time you want to knock heads with random people in the Americas. (If you can round up a friend to help you kick butt locally, all the better.) I know what I'll be doing during lulls in the magazine production cycle. I also know what you'll be doing—sizzling against electrified fences that surround the pitches. —DREW W.

The Aztecs played soccer with human heads.



# WRITERS' BLOCK

### WHAT IS YOUR FONDEST METROID MEMORY?

From fighting Metroids to morphing, it's all good.

**CHRIS HOFFMAN**

I loved seeing Metroid Fusion at E3 2001 (when it was called Metroid IV). I was so happy to see a 2-D Metroid game after a seven-year hiatus.

**CHRIS SHEPPERD**

The Metroids in the first game are what I always remember; they were so challenging, but they were also so much fun. Just brilliant.

**ANDY MYERS**

The first time I beat Mother Brain and Samus took off her helmet to reveal that long brown hair—my mind was blown.

**GEORGE SINFIELD**

Metroid was the first game I ever saw in preproduction. As soon as I made Samus roll into a ball and squeeze through a tight spot, I knew the game was something special.

**STEVE THOMASON**

I'm going to be liberal with my definition of the word memory and say the six hours I've played of Metroid Prime 3. Brilliant stuff.

**SCOTT PELLAND**

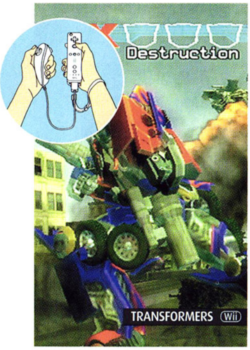
Driven by the countdown to annihilation, the post-Mother Brain-battle escape to Zebes' surface in the original Metroid still rates as one of the most emotionally intense gaming moments for me.

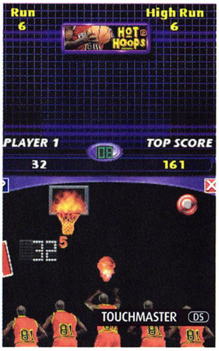
**DREW WILLIAMS**

When my skepticism melted away after playing Prime for 10 minutes. It's a true FPA (first-person adventure), not just an FPS with a few door puzzles.

**PETE MICHAUD**

My career at Nintendo began in game testing and I had the pleasure of playing through Metroid Prime before most. I got goose bumps the minute I landed on Tallon IV.





## TRANSFORMERS

**RATING: 5.5**

PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **Activision**
DEVELOPER: **Traveller's Tales**
ESRB: **Teen**

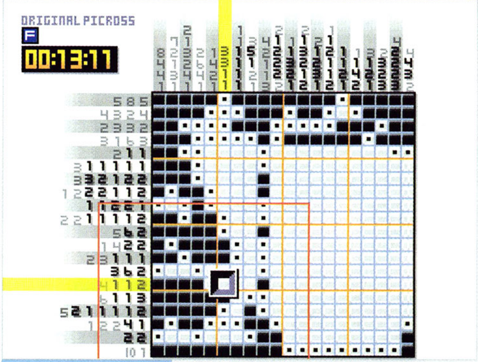
**I've taken quite a bit of flak** around the office for my prediction that the upcoming Transformers movie is going to rock *hard* (the flick's not out yet at the time of this writing). Not that I'm a huge Michael Bay fan, but it's my contention that anything involving semi trucks and fighter jets transforming into giant robots is inherently awesome. Unfortunately, the new Wii game shoots a bit of a hole in that theory. The actual act of transforming in this third-person action-shooter *is* immensely satisfying, particularly when you're moving at high speeds. As it turns out, though, that's not enough to make up for sloppy controls, frustrating camera issues, and repetitive, uninspired game design. My biggest complaint: nearly every mission has you repeating the same task over and over again in the developer's blatant effort to artificially lengthen what is regardless a very short game (you can finish either the Autobot or Decepticon campaign in three or four hours). To make matters worse, battles with other 'bots almost always involve the same basic strategy: throw a car or a signpost at the opposing Transformer to stun him, then move in close for a three-hit combo. There's no attempt to implement your transformation abilities or the destructible environments in any meaningful way. Plus, your long-range weapons are completely ineffectual against all but the lowliest grunts, which is a real shame considering they're a lot more fun to use than the plodding, awkward melee attacks. Finally, longtime fans of the robots in disguise shouldn't be lured in by the promise of unlockable G1 content; like the rest of the game, it's pretty underwhelming. —**Steve T.**

## TOUCHMASTER

**RATING: 8.0**

PLATFORM: **Nintendo DS**
PUBLISHER: **Midway**
DEVELOPER: **PhoenixSoft**
ESRB: **Everyone**

**At first glance, TouchMaster**—a collection of touch-screen minigames from Midway—fails to impress. The game won't win any beauty contests, and its touch-screen functionality is often overly simplistic. But once you spend some time with it, you'll see that what TouchMaster lacks in bells and whistles it makes up for in variety and fun. Among its 23 activities you'll find little repetition and only a few duds. The games Classic Solitaire and Mah Jongg Pairs are pulled off perfectly, while wholly original activities like the basketball game Hot Hoops offer a nice change of pace from the familiar. And nearly every minigame is enjoyable in both single- and multi-player mode—a rare trait among games of this kind. Single-card download functionality and Wi-Fi play would have been welcome features, but even without them, TouchMaster stands out as one of the best pick-up-and-play titles on DS. If you're looking for something a little less straightforward than Clubhouse Games but not quite as quirky as Brain Age, then this one's for you. —**Andy M.**



WORTH 1,000 WORDS

# PICTURE-PERFECT?

## PICROSS DS

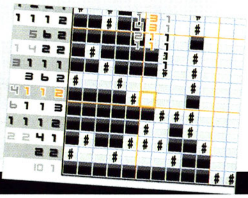
**RATING: 8.0**

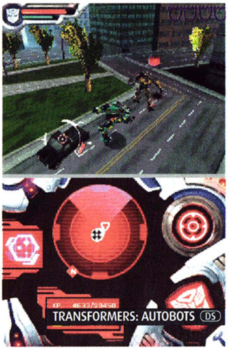
PLATFORM: **Nintendo DS**
PUBLISHER: **Nintendo**
DEVELOPER: **Jupiter**
ESRB: **Everyone**

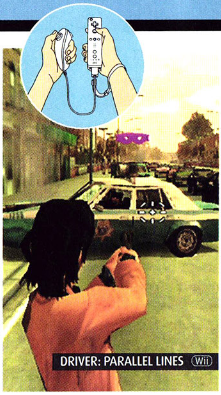
**In 1995 Nintendo introduced** a curious puzzle game for Game Boy that challenged players to complete pictures by filling in squares on a grid. The game, known as Mario's Picross, went largely unnoticed. What it needed was a more suitable platform—one with improved graphics and a simple interface. By happy coincidence, the DS delivers on both counts, and the result is that Picross DS fulfills much of its predecessor's potential.

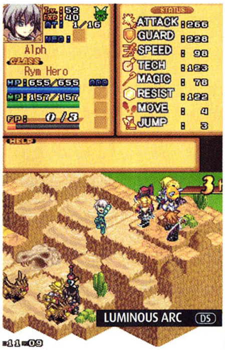
Awash with grids and numbers, Picross DS may look Sudoku-esque on the surface, but mathphobes need not flee in horror. The numbers are friendly reminders of how many squares you need to fill in the corresponding rows and columns. As you tap and fill squares on the touch screen, you'll also see a picture taking shape on the upper screen, providing an additional clue to help you complete the puzzle. Just as in a crossword, the more blanks you fill in, the easier it is to complete the remaining puzzle. Scores are based on completion time, and if you fill a square improperly you'll receive a time penalty. Beginning with simple grids of five squares per side, you can work up to intricate images on large grids spanning 15 squares or more per side. One strike against the game is that the largest puzzles are simply too big to work on whole; you need to magnify a portion of the grid before you can fill in the squares, and navigating the zoomed-in grid is laborious.

Picross DS has several additional modes that extend its appeal. The coolest feature is that players can create their own image-based puzzles and share them with friends either locally or via Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection, giving the game endless replay value. Online speed challenges are fun, as well. The Daily Picross mode takes a page from another Touch Generations title, Brain Age, by including a daily challenge that features quick puzzle activities and a progress chart. Is the game picture-perfect? Not completely (besides the concern noted previously, I could compare the game's music to the sort one encounters while waiting to have one's teeth drilled), but puzzle fans should find the revamped Picross experience fresh, engaging, and mostly painless. —**Scott P.**

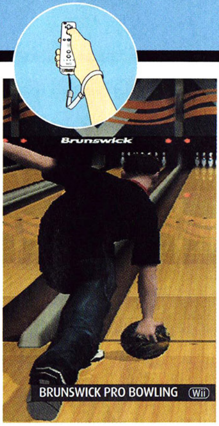



TRANSFORMERS: AUTOBOTS (DS)


DRIVER: PARALLEL LINES (Wii)



LUMINOUS ARC (DS)



BRUNSWICK PRO BOWLING (Wii)

## TRANSFORMERS: AUTOBOTS AND TRANSFORMERS: DECEPTICONS

**RATING: 6.0**

PLATFORM: **Nintendo DS**
PUBLISHER: **Activision**
DEVELOPER: **Vicarious Visions**
ESRB: **Everyone 10+**

**The Transformers may be vehicles** only part of the time, but their DS games—Transformers: Autobots and Transformers: Decepticons—could have nonetheless used a bit more of a tune-up and a bit more polish before pulling out of the garage.

From an overall design standpoint, the games get several things right: they look good, the environments are massive, there's some nice mission variety, the integration of robot and vehicle modes feels completely natural, and it's cool to be able to scan and use dozens of alternate modes for your custom-built 'bot. But under the hood, a few problems rear their heads. The game never follows through on its promises of scale and environmental destruction. It's also frustrating that you can target only objects that are centered on the screen, rather than being able to shoot in the direction your character is facing. It's even more irritating when you get hit by an enemy attack and the camera inevitably spins the wrong direction, and it's worse still when the enemy in question seems to appear out of thin air. Rather than feeling precise, the combat most often comes off as sloppy. And if you fail missions, you're usually forced to watch unskippable cut-scenes ad nauseam.

Should the Transformers license prove powerful enough to make you overlook such difficulties, you'll enjoy plenty of neat features, like six distinct playable characters in each version, along with unique missions, vehicle forms, and environments. The game also boasts a very ambitious Wi-Fi mode, and excellent voice-overs throughout the entire adventure—easily some of the best sound work done on DS. It's too bad such care didn't go into every aspect of the game. —**Chris H.**

## DRIVER: PARALLEL LINES

**RATING: 5.0**

PLATFORM: **Nintendo Wii**
PUBLISHER: **Ubisoft**
DEVELOPER: **Reflections Interactive**
ESRB: **Mature**

**Grand Theft Auto, True Crime, Saints Row** . . . the video game market is inundated with "mature" sandbox games set in New York City (or some reasonable facsimile of it). The Driver series is traveling the same road, to its detriment. In this uninspired retread, you play a small-time thug during the 1970s who gets double-crossed and sent up the river for 20 years; when you get out of the slammer, it's time for revenge. The chance to see the Big Apple during two different eras is a cool hook, but pretty much the only one; everything else, from the cop chases to the tedious missions to the petty crime, feels totally derivative. Parallel Lines practically begs you to start your own mischief, and it doesn't take long to see why—unless you have an itch to run down civilians and steal cars for hours on end, the short, straightforward story will put the brakes on your fun in no time flat. —**Chris S.**

## LUMINOUS ARC

**RATING: 8.0**

PLATFORM: **Nintendo DS**
PUBLISHER: **Atlus**
DEVELOPER: **imageepoch/Marvelous Interactive**
ESRB: **Teen**

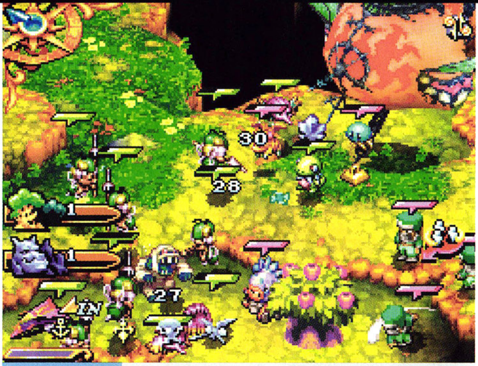
**Strategy-RPGs aren't for everyone,** and if you're not a fan of the genre, Luminous Arc is unlikely to change your disposition. But for those of us who get a kick out of moving little wizards and warriors around a battlefield grid, this low-key title is an unexpected treat. The turn-based gameplay offers plenty of tactical depth, and there are some nice touches—like post-skirmish conversations that can strengthen the main hero's bond with his compatriots—that help set the game apart. Though character progression is strictly linear (you can't choose new jobs for your combatants a la Final Fantasy Tactics), your party boasts plenty of variety, with each member learning new spells and abilities unique to his or her class. Their personalities are nicely developed, as well, and help drive an intriguing story that deals with topics of faith and religion. Unfortunately, the writing is somewhat strained at times, and the frequent attempts at humor almost always fall flat. The same can't be said for the music, however, which is among the best on the DS thanks to the talents of Yasunori Mitsuda and his team of composers. The sheer amount of voice acting in the game also impresses, even if the performances are a bit hit-or-miss. All in all, Luminous Arc is a strong rookie effort from developer imageepoch. The game may be a little rough around the edges, but it's got heart. That's enough to get us excited for whatever this team has in store next. —**Steve T.**

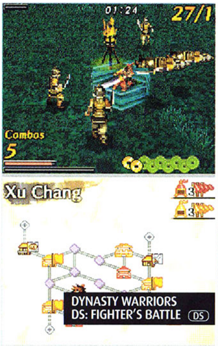
## BRUNSWICK PRO BOWLING

**RATING: 6.0**

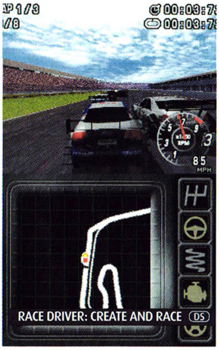
PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **Crave**
DEVELOPER: **Point Of View**
ESRB: **Everyone**

**If you're like me,** you've been hankering for a true bowling sim on the Wii (Wii Sports Bowling comes close, but falls flat in depth); that being said, I suggest you look elsewhere for a bowling fix. Brunswick Pro Bowling may have a fleshed-out career mode as well as realistic-looking graphics, but when it comes to bowling mechanics the game winds up in the gutter. As in Wii Sports Bowling, you line up your shot (primarily with the Control Pad), hold the B Button in when you're ready, pull back the Wii remote, then swing forward and release B. The problem is that there's a severe disconnect between your real-life throw and the in-game one. The bowler's in-game arm does not move at anywhere near the same speed you bowl—therefore, seconds after you've finished bowling, the in-game bowler hurls the ball down the lane. The result is a general feeling of confusion after you miss picking up an easy spare. Truth be told, the game is still fun with a group, and bowling is infinitely more entertaining with a Wii remote than with a standard controller; just don't expect the superior control of Wii Sports Bowling.
—**Pete M.**





DYNASTY WARRIORS DS: FIGHTER'S BATTLE (DS)



RACE DRIVER: CREATE AND RACE (DS)

MANA BURN

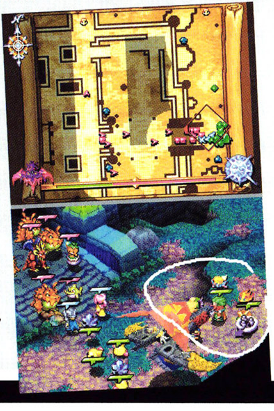
# LESS THAN HEROIC

## HEROES OF MANA

**RATING: 6.5**

PLATFORM: **Nintendo DS**
PUBLISHER: **Square Enix**
DEVELOPER: **Brownie Brown**
ESRB: **Everyone 10+**

**With Brownie Brown (the dev team behind Sword of Mana)** once again at the helm, the Mana series takes a vacation from the action-RPG genre with Heroes of Mana, a full-blown RTS. In some ways Heroes is reminiscent of another DS title, LostMagic, in which you summon a handful of monsters onto a battlefield then use the stylus to divide and direct them. But Heroes takes the concept a step further by allowing you to have a whopping 25 allies on the field at any given time and to select multiple characters by intuitively drawing shapes with the stylus. It's a clever and responsive tool that works well amongst the mayhem of the battlefield. The game also has a fair amount of strategic depth, due mostly to the fact that there are tons of monsters at your beckon call, each with wildly different skills. Some are gatherers that collect materials used for making more monsters. Others wield bows, making them effective against flying enemies. Beautiful character art, classic music by Yoko Shimomura, and a lengthy story campaign make Heroes seem like a home run, and it would be if not for one flaw: shoddy AI. When you direct a group of units to go somewhere, they often take the longest route, go the wrong way, or do nothing at all. Enemies, on the other hand, are smart and can devour your troops in a heartbeat simply because your units didn't go where you intended. The problem persists on many of the game's more-complex maps, severely crippling the experience. On maps that don't have an abundance of obstacles or sharp turns, though, the AI holds up fairly well. Heroes of Mana may not blow the lid off the RTS genre, but it has its merit—you just have to wade through many frustrating moments to find it. —Andy M.



## DYNASTY WARRIORS DS: FIGHTER'S BATTLE

**RATING: 7.5**

PLATFORM: **Nintendo DS**
PUBLISHER: **Koei**
DEVELOPER: **Koei**
ESRB: **Everyone 10+**

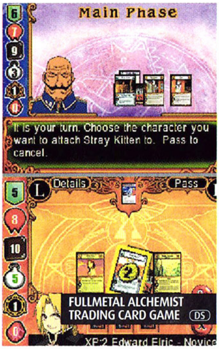
**A button-masher** with a strategy-game pedigree, Koei's Dynasty Warriors DS: Fighter's Battle straddles the line between two genres with awkward balance. You and your opponent (either human or CPU-controlled) select from three new Dynasty Warriors characters to command as you battle for control over 11 Chinese provinces. The fight for a province has you clearing enemy quotas in connected sections, which allows you to traverse the countryside and advance to enemy bases. The sections range from open plains to confusing mazelike courtyards and ships that sway on the sea. As you blaze through the enemy hordes in each section, you can keep track of your opponent's progress on a bottom-screen map. If you and your opponent end up in the same area, a one-on-one battle determines who will stay and who will get knocked back to another section. Established Dynasty Warriors characters provide a boost in the form of cards that pump up your character's fighting stats and provide Obstacle attacks that are randomly selected once you've collected enough coins on the field. Some of the attacks beat down your nearest enemies by shaking the ground or hitting them with falling rocks. Others slow your opponent's progress by rallying the troops in his area or inverting his controls. These outside-of-your-area attacks are satisfying when you're fighting a human opponent who is within earshot, but they don't make a very big bang in single-player contests. The overall battle gives you reason to strategize as you decide whether to attack your opponent's bases or engage with him directly, keeping in mind that it will take you precious time to cross the often-complex maps. The more-immediate fights against hordes and base bosses are not strategic at all, testing only your ability to cut through foes with standard B-Button attacks and more-elaborate A-Button-triggered Musou attacks. —George S.

## RACE DRIVER: CREATE & RACE

**RATING: 7.5**

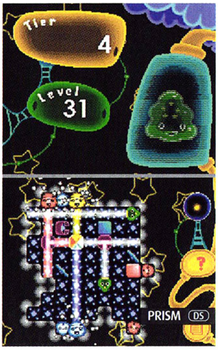
PLATFORM: **Nintendo DS**
PUBLISHER: **Codemasters**
DEVELOPER: **Firebrand Games**
ESRB: **Teen**

**Every now and then** a game breaks free from the pack and laps the field. Mario Kart DS is clearly the cream of the crop when it comes to DS racing, but Codemasters' recent racing entry brings to the starting line a winning formula that's worthy of a test drive. The subtitle tells the story; players can create their own tracks—simple or complex—and race on them against AI opponents or go head-to-head against their friends via DS single-card download. The track-design feature is easy to use and it's one of the most robust editors ever offered on a handheld title. Create & Race may be the game's catchphrase, but it also delivers a solid gameplay experience with smooth controls, good graphics, and challenging AI opponents. With tons of modes and options initially available and more goodies to unlock as you win races, you'll be pushing the pedal to the metal for a long time to come. —Scott P.



It is your turn. Choose the character you want to attach Stray Kitten to. Pass to cancel.

FULLMETAL ALCHEMIST TRADING CARD GAME (DS)



PRISM (DS)

## FULLMETAL ALCHEMIST TRADING CARD GAME

RATING: 7.0

PLATFORM: **Nintendo DS**
PUBLISHER: **Destineer**
DEVELOPER: **Megellan Interactive**
ESRB: **Teen**

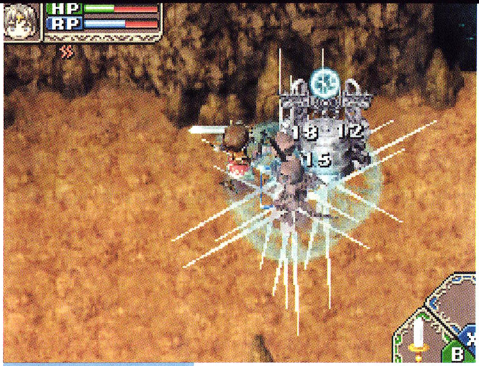
**Complex and intricate,** with a stupefying number of cards (nearly 500) and turn phases (six), Fullmetal Alchemist Trading Card Game is the victim of too many good ideas thrown into one game. The goal is to beat your opponent to the Philosopher's Stone, the key object of Edward Elric's obsession in the animated series. Clues to the item's whereabouts can be found by facing off with your opponent in locations that are determined by drawn cards. After choosing one of 12 characters to represent your search for the stone, you recruit others, load them with supplies, then send a search party out to confront your opponent's group. Much of the game is spent switching between views of the cards in your hand. When viewed as a group the cards are much too small to read, so you have to highlight them and magnify them to remind yourself what special conditions each card brings to the quest. Battles between the parties are contests of wits, strength, or powers of alchemy, and are partially determined by the battle's location. If you're not already familiar with the card game, your first attempt at cracking the rules can be frustrating. Even though the game provides a thorough tutorial that steps through every phase, not to mention in-game instructions that tell you what to do next, there are just too many things to take in during one sitting. Once you let it soak in, you can appreciate the game's top-notch production values (complete with voice samples); the stylus-driven controls; and options that let you play through a single battle, follow a story-oriented line of battles, or trade and play against FA fans locally or via Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection. —**George S.**

## PRISM: LIGHT THE WAY

RATING: 8.5

PLATFORM: **Nintendo DS**
PUBLISHER: **Eidos**
DEVELOPER: **Morpheme Game Studios**
ESRB: **Everyone**

**Brilliant game design** often stems from a simple idea. In the case of Prism: Light the Way, that idea is as simple as a beam of light. Prism puzzles are solved by creating pathways from the light-emitting Bluboids to the light-starved Glowbos. Since light travels in straight lines, you need to use angled mirrors and T-Junction splitters to send the beams to the necessary locations. Prisms and filter blocks transform the Bulboids' white light into the colored beams preferred by red, blue, and yellow Glowbos. The complexity of the puzzles ramps up quickly as players are presented with more Glowbos in rooms filled with light-blocking obstacles. In puzzle mode, which has no time limit, I really loved experimenting with pathways until I reached the solution. But the real challenges are in the Time and Hyper modes, in which time limits force you to act quickly and accurately. There's a two-player single-card download competition, as well. And for those of you who complete Puzzle mode's 120 challenges, there waits the endless promise of Infinity mode. Truly brilliant! —**Scott P.**



DUNGEONS AND RADISHES

# PLOWSHARES INTO SWORDS

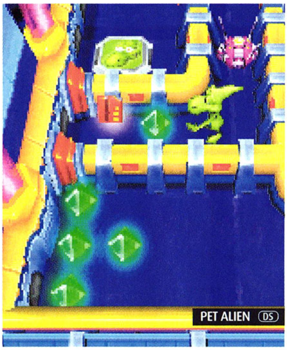
## RUNE FACTORY: A FANTASY HARVEST MOON

RATING: 7.0

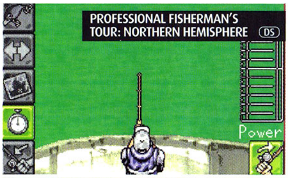
PLATFORM: **Nintendo DS**
PUBLISHER: **Natsume**
DEVELOPER: **Marvelous Interactive**
ESRB: **Everyone**

**The Harvest Moon series** has carved a niche as a battle-free RPG, concentrating on productive activities such as farming and forging relationships with townspeople. Though Rune Factory incorporates a story that involves dungeon-exploring heroics and boss battles, it keeps the traditional Harvest Moon activities at the forefront. Farming is even an important activity inside dungeons, where cultivated crops replenish the hero's stamina-building Rune Points. Another cave activity that hard-core Harvest Moon fans will find familiar is the domestication of monsters, some of which help out on the farm and/or provide help in battles. The game revolves around growing crops and talking to townspeople. Strenuous activity depletes your character's Rune Points, so the somewhat tedious tilling soil, chopping wood, and watering plants that become daily activities may wear out your character, Raguna, to the point that he is ready to call it a day before noon. The prospect of collapsing from walking around town after a morning's work on the farm makes one not want to glad-hand with the public, yet talking to people is the only way to get items such as a fishing rod, a sickle, a hammer, and an axe. Those tools will help you advance beyond simple crop growing and allow you to get extra cash, build an addition to your house, forge stronger tools and weapons, and branch out into cooking.

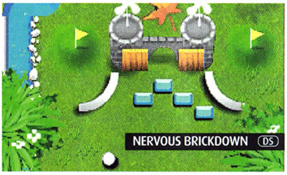
The play control is responsive, but sword swinging is hesitant and Raguna is unable to fight and walk at the same time. Also, when the hero picks up an item, there are different buttons for stowing it in your sack, consuming it, and throwing it, which makes what should be simple object manipulation confusing at times. Also confusing are some of the town's special activities. During a spring festival early in the game, for example, townspeople will tell you that you can earn the affection of a girl by presenting her with a cookie. Yet cookies are nowhere to be found, and you won't have the capacity to bake them until your house has a kitchen. There are plenty of things to do in the game, but you're in for a bit of work before you can start having fun. —**George S.**



PET ALIEN (DS)



PROFESSIONAL FISHERMAN'S TOUR: NORTHERN HEMISPHERE (DS)



NERVOUS BRICKDOWN (DS)

## PET ALIEN

**RATING: 8.0**

PLATFORM: **Nintendo DS**
PUBLISHER: **The Game Factory**
DEVELOPER: **Shin'en**
ESRB: **Everyone**

**Cosmic conundrums abound** when five innocent aliens are snatched by robotic baddies and left to ponder their way through 80 stages filled with brain-bending puzzles, traps, enemies, and bosses. Like the venerable Lost Vikings, each of the Pet Aliens has a special talent: flying, running, smashing cubes, pushing blocks, and extending a superlong tongue to snag items and flip switches. All the action takes place on the DS's top screen using the Control Pad and buttons. Touch-screen controls are employed in the unlockable extra minigames, such as the aptly named Burp'n'Fart sound-memory game. Even though most of the activities in the main adventure are puzzle-based, your action skills will be tested frequently as you dodge explosive robots and take on massive bosses who are trying to blast your poor critters into alien smithereens. The game's subtitle—An Intergalactic Puzzlepalooza—sums it up nicely: the puzzles are often clever, the characters are quite charming, and it's all a bit silly in a friendly Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy sort of way. When the puzzles get tough, just remember—don't panic! —**Scott P.**

## PROFESSIONAL FISHERMAN'S TOUR: NORTHERN HEMISPHERE

**RATING: 5.0**

PLATFORM: **Nintendo DS**
PUBLISHER: **UFO Interactive**
DEVELOPER: **Star Fish**
ESRB: **Everyone**

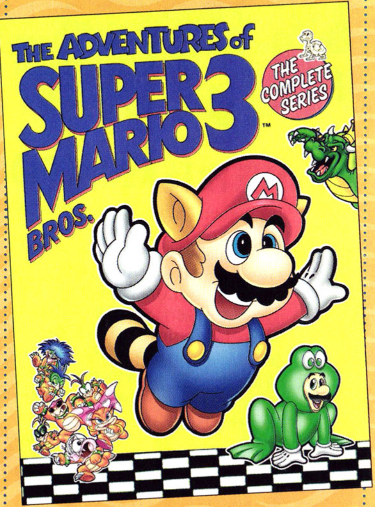
**Fishermen love to tell stories** about the big one that got away. Unfortunately, UFO Interactive's entry in the DS fishing derby—a largely uncontested genre to date—also tells a tale of missed opportunities. Using stylus control to re-create basic fishing actions such as casting and reeling would seem to be a natural direction for the game, but Fisherman's Tour resorts to the genre-standard power meter for casting and fighting, and even though you can reel in your line by tapping the touch screen, it's more effective to use the A Button. The top-screen fish cam is nicely done, as are the fish animations. But your ability to scan the surroundings for a good spot to cast your line is hampered by the top-down perspective, and your options for moving to new locations are limited to preselected sites. Adding insult to injury, in some of the 30 tournament venues there's only one place to fish. The best angling sims have emphasized strategy and given players ample choices from the get-go. Pro Fisherman's Tour, however, doles out the options slowly; perhaps it's in the hope of training players, but few will be patient enough to wait for the big payoff. —**Scott P.**

## NERVOUS BRICKDOWN

**RATING: 7.0**

PLATFORM: **Nintendo DS**
PUBLISHER: **Eidos**
DEVELOPER: **Arkedo**
ESRB: **Everyone**

**The first thing you may notice** about Nervous Brickdown is that it feels like a Flash game. Which isn't a bad thing at all—in fact, the level of polish on this otherwise average Break-Out knockoff is what ultimately makes this game stand out from the crowd. And it sports a respectable number of levels, as well as I-don't-know-what-to-expect-next level design (excellent boss fights included) that keep you glued to your DS until you've seen everything Nervous Brickdown has to offer. In one level your paddle is a futuristic spaceship with the ability to fire an ice laser beam that freezes incoming enemy ships. In another you'll have to fight gravity as you control a golf club while trying to smack a golf ball up a hill over and over without letting it roll back past you. And in yet another you'll be fighting to keep the ball in play on the bottom screen while trying to keep a mindless video game character on the top screen safe by controlling his jumps to avoid obstacles. You won't find much substance here, but if you enjoy creative level design on top of good old-fashioned fun, it doesn't get much better than this clever take on a familiar concept. —**Pete M.**



THE BEST THING ABOUT SATURDAY MORNINGS – ANYTIME YOU LIKE

*The Adventures of Super Mario Bros. 3* brought the adventures of Mario and Luigi right back where they belonged — to their video game roots. Now, for the first time ever, the best thing about Saturday mornings is available whenever you like — the series' entire 13 episodes (that's 26 cartoons!) in a 3-DVD box set, featuring a bonus disc packed with extras.

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[ARCHIVE]

# THE HITS KEEP COMING

The Wii and DS libraries received several nice surprises last month with the NP staff posting stellar ratings for Resident Evil 4: Wii Edition (9.0) and Brothers in Arms DS (9.0). Faring less well, The Bigs (6.0) and Pokémon Battle Revolution (6.5) for Wii both had outstanding points, but also notable lapses. The Bigs bobbled its fielding controls, and Battle Revolution's lack of a deep single-player mode hurt its score in spite of strong visuals and a great multiplayer experience.

SCORES REFLECT INDIVIDUAL REVIEWERS' OPINIONS.
• INDICATES WI-FI COMPATIBLE

| TITLE | SCORE | PUBLISHER | VOL. | ESRB |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Wii** | | | | |
| The Ant Bully | N/A | Midway | 211 | E10+ |
| Avatar: The Last Airbender | N/A | THQ | 211 | E10+ |
| The Barnyard | N/A | THQ | 211 | E10+ |
| The Bigs | 6.0 | 2K Sports | 218 | E |
| Bionicle Heroes | 5.0 | Eidos | 216 | E10+ |
| Blazing Angels: Squadrons of WWII | 7.0 | Ubisoft | 215 | T |
| Bust-A-Move Bash! | 6.5 | Majesco | 217 | E |
| Call of Duty 3 | 6.5 | Activision | 211 | T |
| Cars | N/A | THQ | 211 | E |
| Chicken Little: Ace in Action | 7.0 | Buena Vista | 212 | E10+ |
| Cooking Mama: Cook Off | 7.5 | Majesco | 216 | E |
| Cosmic Family | N/A | Ubisoft | 215 | E |
| Dragon Ball Z: Budokai Tenkaichi 2 | 7.0 | Atari | 211 | T |
| Elebits | 7.5 | Konami | 212 | E |
| Escape from Bug Island! | 3.5 | Eidos | 217 | M |
| Excite Truck | 8.5 | Nintendo | 211 | E |
| Far Cry: Vengeance | 4.0 | Ubisoft | 212 | M |
| The Godfather: Blackhand Edition | 8.0 | Electronic Arts | 216 | M |
| The Grim Adventures of Billy and Mandy | N/A | Midway | 211 | E10+ |
| GT Pro Series | 5.0 | Ubisoft | 211 | E |
| Happy Feet | 4.5 | Midway | 211 | E |
| Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix | 7.0 | Electronic Arts | 218 | E10+ |
| Heatseeker | 7.5 | Codemasters | 215 | T |
| Ice Age 2: The Meltdown | N/A | Sierra | 212 | E10+ |
| Kororinpa: Marble Mania | 7.0 | Hudson Soft/Konami | 215 | E |
| Legend of the Dragon | 5.5 | The Game Factory | 218 | T |
| The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess | 9.5 | Nintendo | 211 | T |
| Madden NFL 07 | 8.5 | Electronic Arts | 211 | E |
| Mario Party 8 | 7.5 | Nintendo | 217 | E |
| Marvel: Ultimate Alliance | 8.0 | Activision | 211 | T |
| Medal of Honor: Vanguard | 6.0 | Electronic Arts | 217 | T |
| Meet the Robinsons | 6.5 | Buena Vista | 215 | E10+ |
| Metal Slug Anthology | 8.0 | SNK Playmore USA | 211 | T |
| Monster 4x4: World Circuit | 6.5 | Ubisoft | 211 | E |
| Mortal Kombat: Armageddon | 8.0 | Midway | 217 | M |
| Need for Speed: Carbon | 6.0 | Electronic Arts | 212 | E10+ |
| Open Season | N/A | Ubisoft | 211 | E10+ |
| Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End | 4.5 | Disney Interactive | 217 | T |
| • Pokémon Battle Revolution | 6.5 | Nintendo | 218 | E |
| Prince of Persia: Rival Swords | 7.0 | Ubisoft | 215 | T |
| Rampage: Total Destruction | 6.5 | Midway | 211 | E10+ |
| Rapala Tournament Fishing | N/A | Activision | 212 | E |
| Ratatouille | 7.5 | THQ | 218 | E |
| Rayman Raving Rabbids | 7.5 | Ubisoft | 211 | E |
| Red Steel | 8.0 | Ubisoft | 211 | T |
| Resident Evil 4: Wii Edition | 9.0 | Capcom | 218 | M |
| Scarface: The World Is Yours | 7.5 | Sierra Entertainment | 218 | M |
| Sonic and the Secret Rings | 8.5 | Sega | 214 | E |
| Spider-Man 3 | 6.0 | Activision | 217 | T |
| SpongeBob SquarePants: Creature from the Krusty Krab | 7.0 | THQ | 211 | E |
| SSX Blur | 8.5 | Electronic Arts | 215 | E |
| Super Paper Mario | 9.5 | Nintendo | 216 | E |
| Super Monkey Ball: Banana Blitz | 8.5 | Sega | 211 | E |
| Super Swing Golf | 7.5 | Tecmo | 212 | E |
| Surf's Up | 6.0 | Ubisoft | 217 | E10+ |
| Tamagotchi: Party On! | 2.5 | Namco Bandai | 217 | E |
| Tiger Woods PGA Tour 07 | 8.5 | Electronic Arts | 215 | E |
| TMNT | 5.0 | Ubisoft | 215 | E10+ |
| Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell: Double Agent | 6.0 | Ubisoft | 211 | M |
| Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam | 7.5 | Activision | 212 | E10+ |
| Trauma Center: Second Opinion | 8.5 | Atlus | 211 | T |
| WarioWare: Smooth Moves | 9.0 | Nintendo | 212 | E |
| Wii Play | 7.0 | Nintendo | 213 | E |
| Wii Sports | 8.0, 8.5 | Nintendo | 211 | E |
| Wing Island | 5.5 | Hudson Soft/Konami | 215 | E |
| World Series of Poker: Tournament of Champions | N/A | Activision | 212 | T |
| **NINTENDO GAMECUBE** | | | | |
| The Ant Bully | 5.0 | Midway | 208 | E10+ |
| Avatar: The Last Airbender | 7.0 | THQ | 210 | E |
| The Barnyard | 6.0 | THQ | 207 | E10+ |
| Baten Kaitos Origins | 8.0 | Nintendo | 209 | T |
| Bionicle Heroes | 5.0 | Eidos | 211 | E10+ |
| Bratz: Forever Diamonds | N/A | THQ | 210 | E |
| FIFA 07 | 8.0 | Electronic Arts | 210 | E |
| Flushed Away | 6.5 | D3PA | 210 | E |
| The Grim Adventures of Billy and Mandy | 6.5 | Midway | 210 | E10+ |
| Happy Feet | N/A | Midway | 211 | E |
| The Legend of Spyro: A New Beginning | 5.5 | Sierra | 209 | E10+ |
| The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess | 9.5 | Nintendo | 212 | T |
| LEGO *Star Wars* II: The Original Trilogy | 7.5 | LucasArts | 209 | E10+ |
| Madden NFL 07 | 9.0 | Electronic Arts | 208 | E |
| Meet the Robinsons | N/A | Buena Vista | 215 | E10+ |
| Monster House | 6.5 | THQ | 207 | E10+ |
| Naruto: Clash of Ninja 2 | 7.5 | Tomy/D3PA | 210 | T |
| Need For Speed: Carbon | 7.5 | Electronic Arts | 211 | E10+ |
| Nicktoons: Battle for Volcano Island | N/A | THQ | 210 | E |
| One Piece: Grand Adventure | 5.5 | Namco Bandai | 208 | T |
| One Piece: Pirates' Carnival | 5.5 | Namco Bandai | 209 | E |
| Open Season | 8.0 | Ubisoft | 209 | E10+ |
| Pac-Man World Rally | 5.5 | Namco Bandai | 208 | E |
| Radio Allergy | 5.0 | 0~3 | 215 | E |
| Shrek Smash N' Crash Racing | N/A | Activision | 213 | E10+ |
| The Sims 2 Pets | 6.5 | Electronic Arts | 211 | E |
| SpongeBob SquarePants: Creature from the Krusty Krab | 8.5 | THQ | 210 | E |
| Super Monkey Ball Adventure | 5.5 | Sega | 208 | E |
| TMNT | N/A | Ubisoft | 214 | E10+ |
| Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell: Double Agent | 4.5 | Ubisoft | 210 | M |
| Tomb Raider: Legend | 7.5 | Eidos | 211 | T |
| **NINTENDO DS** | | | | |
| Alex Rider: Stormbreaker | 4.5 | THQ | 208 | T |
| Arthur and the Invisibles | N/A | Atari | 213 | E |
| Avatar: The Last Airbender | 6.5 | THQ | 210 | E |
| Bionicle Heroes | N/A | Eidos | 211 | T |
| • Bomberman Land Touch! | 7.0 | Atlus | 211 | E |
| Brain Boost: Beta Wave | N/A | Majesco | 212 | E |
| Brain Boost: Gamma Wave | N/A | Majesco | 212 | E |
| Bratz: Forever Diamonds | N/A | THQ | 210 | E |
| Break 'Em All | 7.0 | D3PA | 206 | E |
| Brothers In Arms DS | 9.0 | Ubisoft | 218 | T |
| Bubble Bobble Revolution | 6.0 | Codemasters | 208 | E |
| Cake Mania | 5.5 | Majesco | 216 | E |
| Cartoon Network Racing | N/A | The Game Factory | 213 | E |
| • Castlevania: Portrait of Ruin | 9.0 | Konami | 211 | T |
| Catz | N/A | Ubisoft | 211 | E |
| Charlotte's Web | 6.0 | Sega | 211 | E |
| Chicken Little: Ace in Action | 6.5 | Buena Vista | 210 | E |
| Children of Mana | 6.5 | Nintendo | 210 | E10+ |
| • Clubhouse Games | 7.0 | Nintendo | 209 | E |
| Code Lyoko | 7.0 | The Game Factory | 218 | E10+ |
| • Contact | 6.5 | Atlus | 209 | E10+ |
| Cookie & Cream | 6.5 | Agetec | 217 | E |
| Cooking Mama | 7.0 | Majesco | 209 | E |
| Crash Boom Bang! | 4.0 | Sierra | 209 | E |
| Custom Robo Arena | 7.5 | Nintendo | 215 | E10+ |
| Death Jr. And The Science Fair of Doom | 5.0 | Konami | 217 | E10+ |
| Deep Labyrinth | 6.0 | Atlus | 208 | E10+ |
| • Diddy Kong Racing DS | 7.5 | Nintendo | 213 | E |
| • Digimon World DS | N/A | Namco Bandai | 212 | E |
| Diner Dash: Sizzle & Serve | 6.5 | Eidos | 217 | E |
| Disney's American Dragon: Jake Long—Attack of the Dark Dragon | N/A | Buena Vista | 208 | E |

## REVIEWER NOTES

### PLANET PUZZLE LEAGUE

I'll admit that when it comes to falling-block games, I've always preferred the Tetris Attack-style puzzlers. Even so, Planet Puzzle League exceeds my expectations in virtually every way. I was a little apprehensive about how well the touch screen would work, but it took all of about 15 seconds before it felt second nature. And while they're not all that important in a game like this, the stylish graphics say something about Planet Puzzle League's attention to detail. —Chris S.

### >CLUBHOUSE GAMES

The other day while sitting on the toilet playing my millionth game of Mahjong Solitaire, I realized that the value I've gotten out of this one minigame in the Clubhouse Games collection is incalculable—I failed utterly to calculate a meaningful cost-to-fun ratio for it. All I can say is that if you find anything that's this engaging, either buy it or marry it.

—Scott P.

### TOUCH THE DEAD

Winning the award for Most Literal Title Ever, Touch the Dead, with all its zombie-tapping action, failed to captivate our reviewer two issues back. But what Drew saw as boring and uninspired I saw as campy and fun . . . for a time, at least. The game definitely wears out its welcome after a few hours. —Andy M.

| Title | Score | Publisher | Vol. | ESRB |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Dogz | N/A | Ubisoft | 211 | E |
| Dragon Ball Z: Harukanaru Densetsu | 4.0 | Atari | 217 | E |
| Dragon Quest Heroes: Rocket Slime | 9.0 | Square Enix | 208 | E |
| Elite Beat Agents | 9.5 | Nintendo | 210 | E10+ |
| Eragon | N/A | Vivendi | 211 | T |
| Etrian Odyssey | 7.0 | Atlus | 217 | T |
| F-24 Stealth Fighter | 3.5 | Majesco | 215 | E10+ |
| Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer | 2.0 | 2K Games | 218 | E10+ |
| FIFA 07 | N/A | Electronic Arts | 210 | E |
| • Final Fantasy III | 8.0 | Square Enix | 211 | E10+ |
| • Final Fantasy Fables: Chocobo Tales | 7.0 | Square Enix | 216 | E |
| Flipper Critters | 4.5 | Ignition Entertainment | 218 | E |
| Flushed Away | N/A | D3PA | 210 | E |
| Fossil League D.T.C. | N/A | D3PA | 214 | E |
| Freedom Wings | 6.0 | Natsume | 207 | E10+ |
| Full Metal Alchemist: Dual Sympathy | 7.0 | Destineer | 212 | T |
| Glory Days 2: Brotherhood of Men | 6.0 | Eidos | 218 | E10+ |
| Gunpey DS | 6.5 | Namco BAndai | 210 | E |
| Harlem Globetrotters World Tour | N/A | DSI | 211 | E |
| Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix | 7.0 | Electronic Arts | 218 | E10+ |
| Harvest Moon DS | 6.0 | Natsume | 208 | E |
| Hi Hi Puffy Amiyumi: The Genie and the Amp | 4.5 | D3PA | 206 | E10+ |
| Hoshigami Remix | 6.0 | Aksys Games | 218 | E |
| Hotel Dusk: Room 215 | 8.0 | Nintendo | 213 | T |
| Inuyasha: Secret of The Divine Jewel | 6.0 | Namco Bandai | 213 | E10+ |
| Izuna: Legend of the Unemployed Ninja | 6.5 | Atlus | 213 | E10+ |
| Justice League Heroes | 3.0 | Warner Bros.Interactive | 210 | E10+ |
| Kim Possible: Global Gemini | N/A | Buena Vista | 214 | E10+ |
| Kirby: Squeak Squad | 7.5 | Nintendo | 212 | E |
| • Konductra | N/A | O~3 | 208 | E |
| Konami Classics Series: Arcade Hits | 7.5 | Konami | 214 | E10+ |
| The Legend of Spyro: A New Beginning | N/A | Sierra | 209 | E |
| LEGO *Star Wars* II: The Original Trilogy | 4.5 | LucasArts | 209 | E |
| Lost in Blue 2 | 5.0 | Konami | 215 | E10+ |
| Lunar Knights | 8.0 | Konami | 213 | E10+ |
| Madden NFL 07 | 7.5 | Electronic Arts | 208 | E |
| Mage Knight: Destiny's Soldier | N/A | Namco Bandai | 210 | E10+ |
| Magical Starsign | 7.0 | Nintendo | 210 | E |
| Mario Hoops 3-on-3 | 7.5 | Nintendo | 209 | E |
| • Mario Vs. Donkey Kong 2: March of the Minis | 7.5 | Nintendo | 209 | E |
| Marvel Trading Card Game | 4.0 | Konami | 213 | T |
| MechAssault: Phantom War | 8.0 | Majesco | 209 | T |
| Meet the Robinsons | N/A | Buena Vista | 215 | E10+ |
| Mega Man ZX | 8.5 | Capcom | 208 | E |
| Meteos: Disney Magic | 7.5 | Buena Vista | 214 | E |
| Micro Machines V4 | N/A | Codemasters | 211 | E |
| Monster Bomber | N/A | Majesco | 212 | E |
| Monster House | 5.5 | THQ | 207 | E |
| My Frogger: Toy Trials | N/A | Konami | 211 | E |
| Nacho Libre | 7.0 | Majesco | 210 | E10+ |
| Naruto: Ninja Council 3 | 6.0 | Tomy | 217 | E10+ |
| Need For Speed: Carbon | N/A | Electronic Arts | 211 | E |
| Nicktoons: Battle for Volcano Island | N/A | THQ | 210 | E |
| • Open Season | N/A | Ubisoft | 209 | E |
| Over the Hedge: Hammy Goes Nuts | N/A | Activision | 210 | E |
| Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney Justice for All | 9.0 | Capcom | 212 | T |
| Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End | 7.0 | Disney Interactive | 217 | E10+ |
| • Planet Puzzle League | 8.5 | Nintendo | 217 | E |
| • Pogo Island | 7.0 | Electronic Arts | 215 | E |
| Point Blank DS | 6.0 | Namco Bandai | 206 | E10+ |
| • Pokémon Diamond/Pearl | 9.0 | Nintendo | 216 | E |
| Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Blue Rescue Team | 8.0 | Nintendo | 209 | E |
| Pokémon Ranger | 7.0 | Nintendo | 210 | E |
| Puzzle Quest: Challenge of the Warlords | 4.0 | D3PA | 215 | E10+ |
| Quickspot | 5.5 | Namco Bandai | 214 | E10+ |
| Rafa Nadal Tennis | N/A | Codemasters | 213 | E |
| Rainbow Islands Revolution | 4.5 | Codemasters | 208 | E |
| Rayman Raving Rabbids | 7.0 | Ubisoft | 214 | E |
| Scooby-Doo! Who's Watching Who? | 6.5 | THQ | 210 | E |
| The Settlers | 5.0 | Ubisoft | 217 | E |
| Shrek The Third | 7.0 | Activision | 217 | E |
| • SimCity DS | 8.0 | Electronic Arts | 218 | E |
| The Sims 2 Pets | 5.5 | Electronic Arts | 211 | E |
| SNK Vs. Capcom Card Fighters DS | 7.0 | SNK Playmore | 215 | T |
| Spectrobes | 8.0 | Buena Vista | 214 | E |
| Spider-Man 3 | 7.0 | Activision | 217 | E10+ |
| Spider-Man: Battle for New York | 6.0 | Activision | 212 | E10+ |
| SpongeBob SquarePants: Creature from the Krusty Krab | N/A | THQ | 210 | E |
| Star Fox Command | 9.5 | Nintendo | 208 | E10+ |
| Star Trek: Tactical Assault | 5.5 | Bethesda | 210 | E |
| *Star Wars*: Lethal Alliance | 7.0 | Ubisoft | 212 | E10+ |
| Steel Horizon | 4.5 | Konami | 214 | E10+ |
| The Suite Life of Zack & Cody | N/A | Buena Vista | 208 | E |
| Tamagotchi Connection: Cornershop 2 | N/A | Namco Bandai | 211 | E |
| • Tenchu: Dark Secret | 5.0 | Nintendo | 208 | T |
| That's So Raven: Psychic on the Scene | N/A | Buena Vista | 210 | E |
| Theme Park | 6.0 | Electronic Arts | 215 | E |
| Time Ace | 6.5 | Konami | 216 | E10+ |
| TMNT | 5.5 | Ubisoft | 214 | E10+ |
| Tom and Jerry Tales | N/A | Warner Bros. Interactive | 210 | E |
| Tomb Raider: Legend | 4.5 | Eidos | 210 | T |
| • Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam | 7.5 | Activision | 211 | E |
| Totally Spies! 2: Undercover | N/A | Atari | 213 | E10+ |
| Touch Detective | 6.0 | Atlus | 210 | E10+ |
| Touch The Dead | 5.5 | Eidos | 217 | M |
| Trioncube | 5.5 | Namco Bandai | 213 | E |
| Wario: Master of Disguise | 6.5 | Nintendo | 214 | E10+ |
| Winning Eleven Pro Evolution Soccer 2007 | 6.5 | Konami | 213 | E |
| Xiaolin Showdown | 5.0 | Konami | 212 | E |
| Yoshi's Island DS | 8.0 | Nintendo | 211 | E |
| • Yu-Gi-Oh! Spirit Caller | N/A | Konami | 213 | E |
| • Yu-Gi-Oh! World Championship Tournament 2007 | N/A | Konami | 215 | E |
| **GAME BOY ADVANCE** | | | | |
| Alex Rider: Stormbreaker | N/A | THQ | 208 | E10+ |
| The Ant Bully | N/A | Midway | 208 | E |
| Arthur and the Invisibles | N/A | Atari | 213 | E |
| Avatar: The Last Airbender | N/A | THQ | 210 | E |
| Back to Stone | N/A | Graffiti Entertainment | 214 | E |
| Backyard Basketball 2007 | N/A | Atari | 209 | E |
| Battle B-Daman: Fire Spirits! | 6.5 | Atlus | 210 | E |
| Bionicle Heroes | N/A | Eidos | 211 | E |
| Bratz: Forever Diamonds | N/A | THQ | 210 | E |
| Capcom Classics Mini Mix | 7.5 | Capcom | 209 | T |
| The Cheetah Girls | N/A | Buena Vista | 208 | E |
| Disney's American Dragon: Jake Long—Rise of the Huntsclan | N/A | Buena Vista | 208 | E10+ |
| Eragon | N/A | Vivendi | 211 | E10+ |
| FIFA 07 | N/A | Electronic Arts | 210 | E |
| Final Fantasy V Advance | 8.5 | Nintendo | 210 | E |
| Final Fantasy VI Advance | 9.5 | Nintendo | 213 | E10+ |
| Flushed Away | N/A | D3PA | 210 | E |
| Foster's Home For Imaginary Friends | N/A | Crave Entertainment | 213 | E |
| Games Explosion! | 4.0 | THQ | 208 | E |
| Ghost Rider | N/A | 2K Games | 213 | T |
| Harlem Globetrotters World Tour | N/A | DSI | 211 | E |
| Justic League Heroes: The Flash | 5.5 | Warner Bros. Interactive | 210 | E10+ |
| The Legend of Spyro: A New Beginning | N/A | Sierra | 209 | E |
| LEGO *Star Wars* II: The Original Trilogy | N/A | LucasArts | 209 | E |
| Madden NFL 07 | 7.0 | Electronic Arts | 208 | E |
| Mazes of Fate | N/A | Graffiti Entertainment | 213 | T |
| Meet the Robinsons | N/A | Buena Vista | 215 | E |
| Naruto: Ninja Council 2 | 5.5 | Tomy/D3PA | 210 | E10+ |
| Need For Speed: Carbon | N/A | Electronic Arts | 211 | E |
| Nicktoons: Battle for Volcano Island | N/A | THQ | 210 | E |
| Open Season | N/A | Ubisoft | 209 | E |
| Over the Hedge: Hammy Goes Nuts | N/A | Activision | 210 | E |
| Phil of the Future | N/A | Buena Vista | 208 | E |
| Pirates of the Caribbean: | | | | |
| Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Red Rescue Team | 8.0 | Nintendo | 209 | E |
| Polarium Advance | N/A | Atlus | 212 | E |
| The Santa Clause 3 | N/A | Buena Vista | 209 | E |
| Shrek Smash N' Crash Racing | N/A | Activision | 213 | E10+ |
| The Sims 2 Pets | N/A | Electronic Arts | 211 | E |
| Sonic the Hedgehog Genesis | 6.0 | Sega | 211 | E |
| SpongeBob SquarePants: Creature from the Krusty Krab | N/A | THQ | 210 | E |
| Summon Night: Swordcraft Story 2 | 8.0 | Atlus | 210 | E10+ |
| Super Robot Taisen: Original Generation 2 | 7.0 | Atlus | 211 | T |
| TMNT | 7.0 | Ubisoft | 214 | E10+ |
| Tom and Jerry Tales | N/A | Warner Bros. Interactive | 210 | E |
| Tomb Raider: Legend | N/A | Eidos | 210 | T |
| Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam | 7.5 | Activision | 211 | E |
| Totally Spies! 2: Undercover | N/A | Atari | 213 | E10+ |
| Yggdra Union | 7.5 | Atlus | 211 | T |

TURN 7
VS
MIKE HAGGAR
CHARACTER
TRAIT
RARITY
HP 600
BP 600
MIKE HAGGAR
CHANGE

## SNK VS. CAPCOM CARD FIGHTERS DS

I'm not a big fan of collectible card games, but SNK vs. Capcom Card Fighters DS is accessible enough that anyone can play, but it retains enough depth for those who want to master its nuances. The fact that the cards are based upon two of the richest universes in gaming doesn't hurt either. The translation, however, is absolute nonsense, and it's too bad the story mode focuses on such generic characters. —Chris H.

## >HARRY POTTER AND THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX (Wii)

**EA finally got a Harry Potter game right. Order of the Phoenix looks as good as anything currently on the Wii and takes full advantage of the remote's capabilities.**

—Drew W.

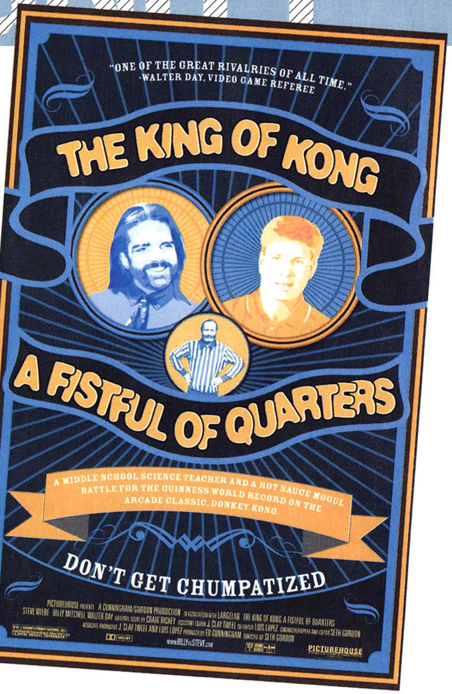
## LUNAR KNIGHTS

The dog days of summer are always slow when it comes to new releases, but that makes it the perfect time to catch up on any overlooked gems you may have missed out on earlier in the year. One title that didn't receive nearly as much attention as it deserved is Lunar Knights. The latest effort from the studio behind Metal Gear Solid is a highly polished adventure that offers great action, innovative play mechanics, and some impressive space-shooting segments. —Steve T.

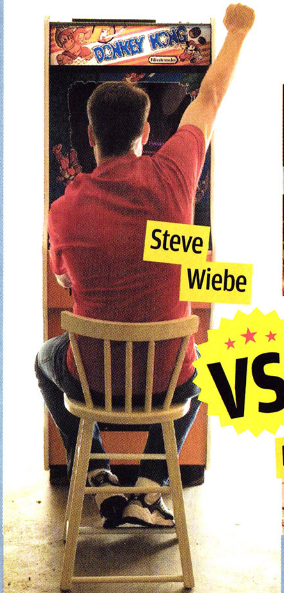
MOVIES

# The Highest Score

Donkey Kong is ready for his big-screen debut in ***The King of Kong: A Fistful of Quarters***. And no, it's not what you're thinking.


"ONE OF THE GREAT RIVALRIES OF ALL TIME."
-WALTER DAY, VIDEO GAME REFEREE
THE KING OF KONG
A FISTFUL OF QUARTERS
A MIDDLE SCHOOL SCIENCE TEACHER AND A HOT SAUCE MOGUL BATTLE FOR THE GUINNESS WORLD RECORD ON THE ARCADE CLASSIC, DONKEY KONG.
DON'T GET CHUMPATIZED
PICTUREHOUSE PRESENTS A CUNNINGHAM/GORDON PRODUCTION IN ASSOCIATION WITH LARGELAB THE KING OF KONG A FISTFUL OF QUARTERS STEVE WIEBE BILLY MITCHELL WALTER DAY ORIGINAL SCORE BY CRAIG RICHEY ASSISTANT EDITOR J. CLAY TWEEL CO EDITOR LUIS LOPEZ ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS J. CLAY TWEEL AND LUIS LOPEZ PRODUCED BY ED CUNNINGHAM CINEMATOGRAPHER AND EDITOR SETH GORDON DIRECTED BY SETH GORDON
DOLBY
www.BILLYvsSTEVE.com
PICTUREHOUSE

**With Uwe Boll "films"** terrorizing Tinseltown, the bar for video game-themed movies is in dire need of raising. Thankfully, we have talented director Seth Gordon to redeem the genre. His new documentary, *The King of Kong: A Fistful of Quarters,* chronicles the true story of the two greatest Donkey Kong (that's the original, 1981 arcade version) players in the world as they battle it out for the all-time high score. The film follows the saga of two men: Steve Wiebe is an unassuming middle-school science teacher who, after obsessively playing Donkey Kong for many years, becomes a contender for the high score. His opponent, Billy Mitchell, is an outspoken entrepreneur and the reigning champion of Donkey Kong at the start of the film. When Billy's greatest achievement is threatened by Steve and Guinness World Records announces a


DONKEY KONG
Nintendo

Steve Wiebe

VS.

Billy Mitchell

If you can best Billy Mitchell's high score in Pac-Man . . . this could be you.

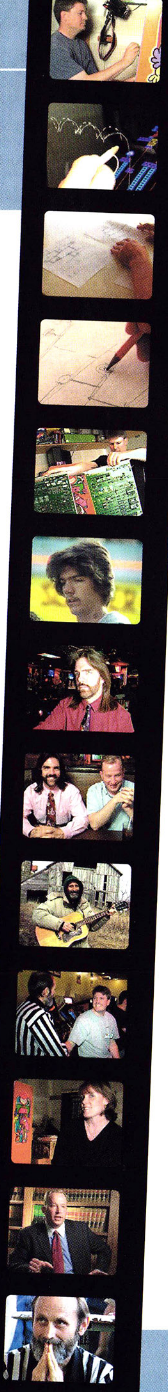
> **“Instead of good-guy/bad-guy, we saw it as Apollo Creed and Rocky.”** —Seth Gordon, director

plan to induct a Donkey Kong high score into the record books, a rivalry forms between the two. “Instead of good-guy/bad-guy, we saw it as Apollo Creed and Rocky,” explains director Seth Gordon. “Apollo Creed is not bad; he’s just really charismatic, and really powerful, and really excellent at what he does. In *Rocky* he loses, and in *Rocky II* he happens to win, and we didn’t know which *Rocky* we were a part of, if you know what I mean.”

We had a chance to preview the documentary, and while the good-guy/bad-guy theme does indeed pervade it, the film’s focus is on gaming, from the classic titles to the quirky people that play them. But what makes Donkey Kong worthy of being the subject of a documentary as opposed to Pac-Man or Space Invaders or even a newer game? Steve Wiebe weighs in: “The whole concept is so simple. There’s only one joystick—left, right, up, down—and a jump button. But what they did with that was amazing. If you look at the games nowadays—they have all these controls, but it’s really almost like watching a movie.” Steve’s affinity for the iconic ape inspired him to sketch out diagrams for his Donkey Kong methods, videotape his achievements, and travel across the country for tournaments—all of which is documented in the film.

To find out whether Steve breaks Billy’s record, you’ll have to see *The King of Kong: A Fistful of Quarters* for yourself. It will hit theaters nationwide in late August, and that’s only the beginning. New Line Cinema has acquired the rights to the story, and plans to release a feature dramatization to theaters sometime next year. Seth Gordon is already on board to direct the project. “It’s going to be the first feature film about a classic arcade game, in the sense that it has a retrospective look at the games,” he says. It may seem like a strange subject matter for a major motion picture, but if a movie about driving to a beauty pageant can earn a best-picture nomination, anything can happen.

—Andy M.



EVENTS

## Wii Goes for Gold

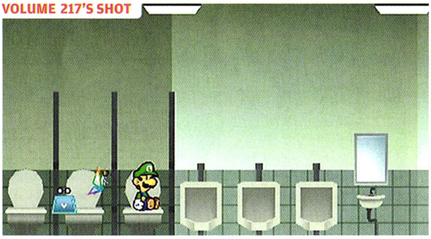
**Following a partnership with** Roush Fenway Racing, Nintendo has unveiled its Wii-branded Ford Fusion car, to be driven by Nascar driver Greg Biffle in two upcoming races: one on August 12 at Watkins Glen International, and the other on September 23 at Dover International Speedway. Keep an eye out!

SCREEN TEST

## Here, Kitty Kitty

**The wild animals in** Scarface: The World Is Yours aren’t friendly, but they sure are funny. If you’re feeling inspired, send your best screenshot caption to community@nintendopower.com. For now, enjoy some bathroom humor courtesy of your fellow NP readers.

**VOLUME 217’S SHOT**



“Who says all Wii games are kiddy?” —Andrew W.

“Maybe switching to 3-D mode would help.” —Judy S.

“Finally! I’ve been holding that in for years!” — Lanayru

“According to recent polls, Nintendo Power is the best magazine to use as toilet paper.” —LEGENDARYMEMBER

“Hey, Luigi, how about a courtesy flush, buddy?” —Tom G.

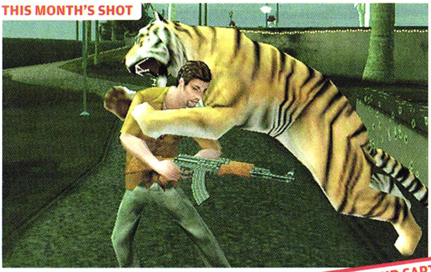
“Tiptron’s summary: That’s Luigi. He’s pooping.” —Electro_Wolf

“Now if I only had a Pixl that could light a match!” —J4hand

“The next time Mario goes down this tube looking for coins, he’s-a gonna be in for a BIG surprise!” —Michael P.

“I always was #2.” —TuckLink

**THIS MONTH’S SHOT**



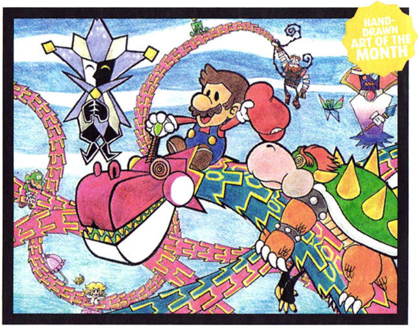
“im on ur thug, tearin out his spleenz”

HERE’S OUR CAPTION.
Think you can do better?

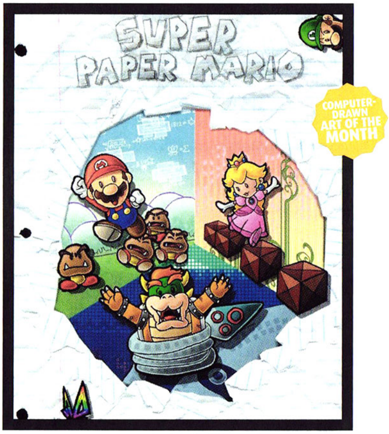
ART OF THE MONTH

# Mixing It Up

Since we began the art of the month, we've had two categories: hand-drawn and computer-drawn. After seeing Oozo_the_Clown's inspiring mixed-media presentation, maybe it's time to rethink things. Why couldn't sculpture or photography get some love? Artists, feel free to submit your best works, no matter the medium.


HAND-DRAWN ART OF THE MONTH

**ARTIST:** EGWENE_23 **SUBJECT:** SUPER PAPER MARIO


SUPER PAPER MARIO
COMPUTER-DRAWN ART OF THE MONTH

**ARTIST:** OOZO_THE_CLOWN **SUBJECT:** SUPER PAPER MARIO

Looking to submit art for the first time and not sure what to do? Visit **forums.nintendo.com** for details. Be sure to read the rules before you post your masterpieces.

# Reader Review

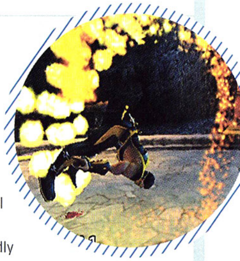
LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD!

**Each month we encourage our readers** to submit reviews of games, but remember to follow the rules: keep them under 300 words, and check your spelling! If you'd like to submit a review for NP, first become an NSider at Nintendo.com. Then head to the Reviews forum and submit your game critique. Reviews are selected based on overall writing quality, objectivity, and game knowledge.

## Mortal Kombat: Armageddon

Reviewed by:

HEIR_TO_HYRULE



Mortal Kombat: Armageddon is a great fighting game but it has some occasional rough edges. The basic fighting system stays true to what we've seen since Deadly Alliance—it isn't too graceful or deep, but it's definitely fun. The 60+ characters are really impressive, and the cast of fighters is well-balanced. The Wii controls work fairly well—simple gestures make the game far more accessible and intuitive, especially for newcomers. At the same time, the motions feel like they have a bit of lag, and sometimes aren't recognized at all, which can be problematic. Fortunately, the game also supports GameCube and classic controllers.

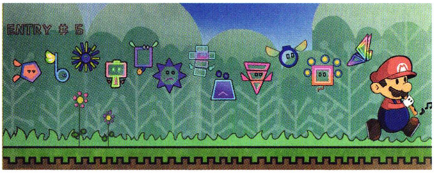
There are a lot of ways to customize Armageddon. The Kreate-a-Fighter mode is a very deep and robust character-creation system that can really allow for some really cool fighters to be made, as long as you are willing to put in the time and effort. The Kreate-a-Fatalities feature is an interesting addition. Unfortunately, they get old quickly, lacking all the personality that the character-specific fatalities had in previous games.

The Konquest adventure does a fairly good job of telling the story. The mode is quite short, lasting only five or six hours, and the fighting, unfortunately, gets repetitive. The racing mode, Motor Kombat, is decent at best; while it's amusing for the first couple tries, unless you have friends with you, there's no real reason to go back to this.

Armageddon isn't perfect, but Midway has proven that a good fighting game can be made on the Wii successfully. Despite lacking online play, Mortal Kombat: Armageddon is recommendable just for how accessible and fun it is.

## Extra Credit

**Not wanting to be shown up in Nintendo Power,** the moderators of Nintendo's forums held their own art contest. Not surprisingly (ahem), *Hen*, the queen of the art forums, took home top honors with this darling pied-piper salute to Super Paper Mario. Congratulations, *Hen*!

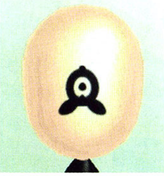


MII OF THE MONTH

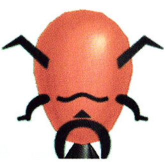
# Mii Freak Fest

**Like mad scientists,** our readers must cackle hysterically each time they use the Mii editor to mold one of their bizarre creations. This month we were especially disturbed by Alan A.'s rendition of Bowser, using a nose for the chin and sunglasses for cheeks. Nicely done, Alan. —ANDY M.

**Runners-Up:**

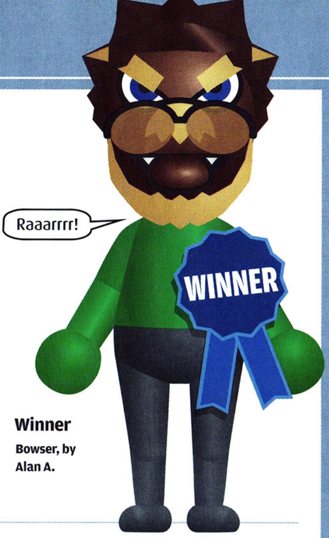


Unown A, by Efren T.



Cucaracha, by Tomás S.

Blechhh, by Jeffrey M.



**Winner**

Bowser, by Alan A.

EVENTS

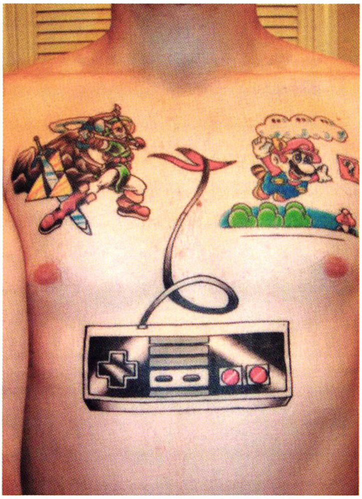
# Fathers Know Best

**In addition to current games** and game systems, the Nintendo World store in New York City's Rockefeller Center houses a mini museum of items from Nintendo's early video game days: Game & Watch handhelds, an NES prototype, and even a Game Boy that survived the first Gulf War. On June 16th, the store invited fathers who may have been discovering games during Nintendo's first golden age to team up with their kids for Nintendo's Father's Day Challenge. The generation-spanning Big Brain Academy: Wii Degree was the game of choice for a 16-team tournament that had players blazing through brain-expanding exercises in five categories: identification, memorization, analysis, computation, and visualization. Competition was fierce and fast, but in the end, father Rick Singer and his son Michael claimed the title of Biggest Brain, taking home a trophy and a prize package that included a Wii console and a copy of Big Brain Academy: Wii Degree. The Singers were taken aback by their victory. "We entered the Father's Day Challenge to have fun, and had no expectations of winning," said Rick. "This was certainly a memorable experience." —GEORGE S.

TATTOOS

# Old-School for Life

**Any tattoo that involves** an NES controller bursting from someone's chest a la *Alien* is okay in our book. Throw Link and Raccoon Mario into the mix, and you've got an artistic masterpiece. Joey Z.'s tattoos are nigh unbelievable, but his impassioned email to community@nintendo.com sold us on their authenticity. "I just want to express my love for Nintendo and to all the fans out there." Message coming across loud and clear, Joey. —ANDY M.



October 2007 Vol. 220

# NEXT MONTH

**Nintendo's huge fall lineup is revealed with headline news from E3, hands-on previews, and developer interviews.**

SUPER MARIO GALAXY™

## GALAXY QUEST

We blast off with Mario and friends for our first in-depth look at Super Mario Galaxy for Wii. It's out of this world.

## METROID SURVIVAL GUIDE

What do you do when corruption threatens to destroy you? NP answers that question and many others to help you survive Metroid Prime 3: Corruption.

## E3 IMPRESSIONS

All the news, interviews, announcements, and hands-on demos from the annual industry gathering in Santa Monica will activate your salivary glands. We suggest wearing a bib while reading our report.

## AND SO MUCH MORE

From Brain Age 2 on DS to Looney Tunes and Pac-Man for Wii, Volume 220 will feature surprises, insights and exclusives.

# CONTACTS

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Note: 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. Pacific Standard Time, every day. French- and Spanish-speaking representatives are available. (We are unable to answer gameplay questions on this line.)

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**ESRB GAME RATING INFORMATION**
To contact the ESRB or for more information, visit www.esrb.org.
The Entertainment Software Rating Board evaluates each game's content and assigns one of the following ratings to reflect the appropriate age group for the game.

- Early Childhood
- Everyone
- Everyone (10+)
- Teen (13+)
- Mature (17+)
- Adult (18+)
- Rating Pending

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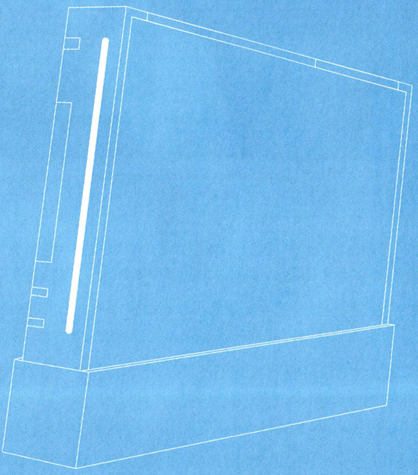

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‡ For information about your current Wii Console warranty, please refer to the Wii Operations Manual.

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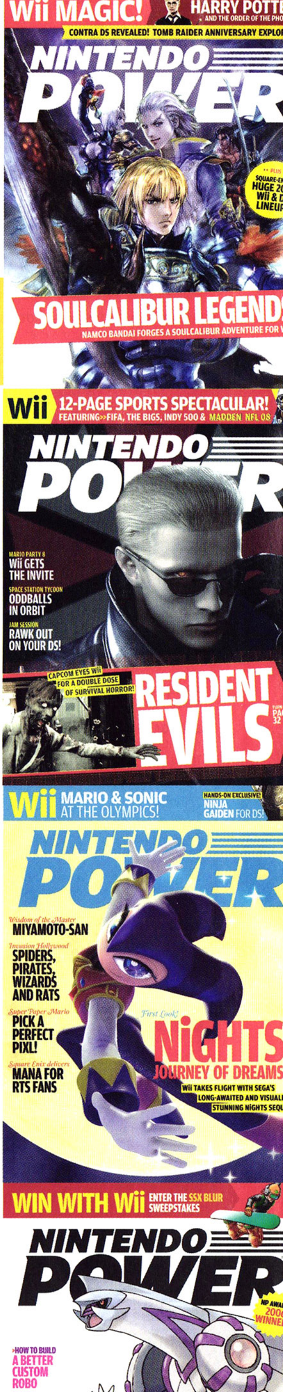
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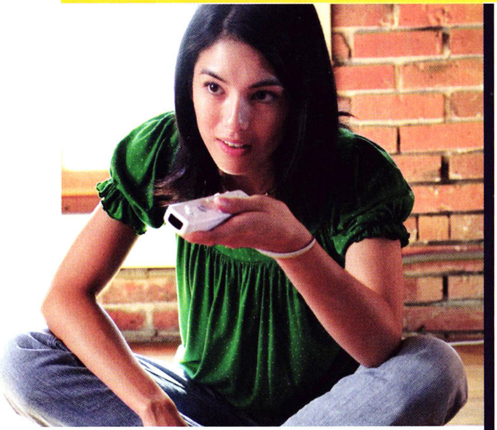

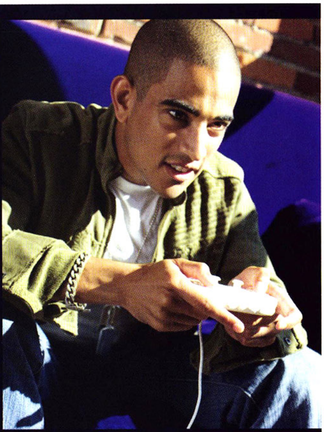

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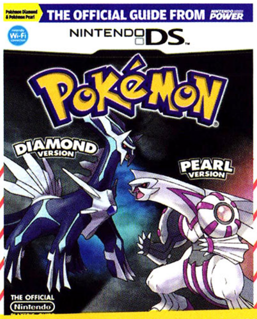
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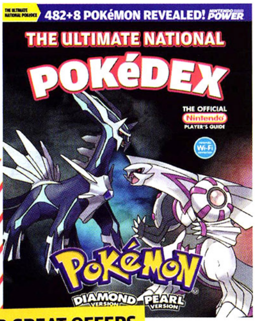
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